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# Magus of the Library

Mitsu  
Izumi

Based on *Kafna of the Wind* by Sophie Schwimm  
Translated by Hiroto Hamada



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**Magus of the Library**  
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# Magus of the Library

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CHAPTER 18

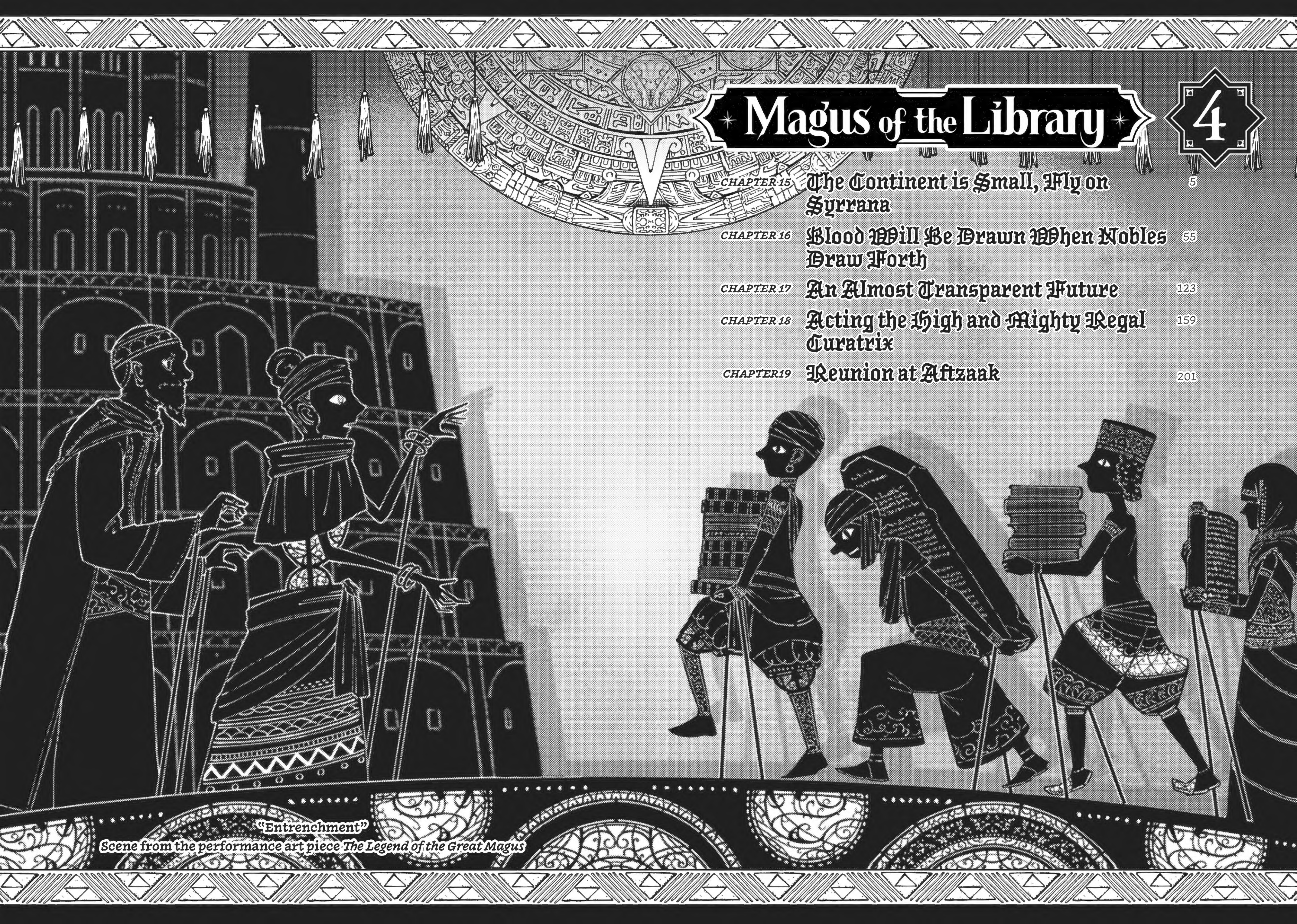
Acting the High and Mighty Regal Curatrix

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CHAPTER 19

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"Entrenchment"

Scene from the performance art piece *The Legend of the Great Magus*



*"No theft a crime if Haupi purse,  
no trespass wrong if Haupi shamed,  
no murder sin if Haupi blood."*

—Zarama Ingare'i  
From *The Words of Justice*





# *Libraries...*

*...and  
monuments  
to all life  
across time.*

*...galleries  
dedicated  
to history's  
thread...*

*Amassers of  
memory...*

*To the  
people, it  
was known  
as the Great  
Central  
Library.*

*...one stood  
above  
the rest,  
directing  
all others.*

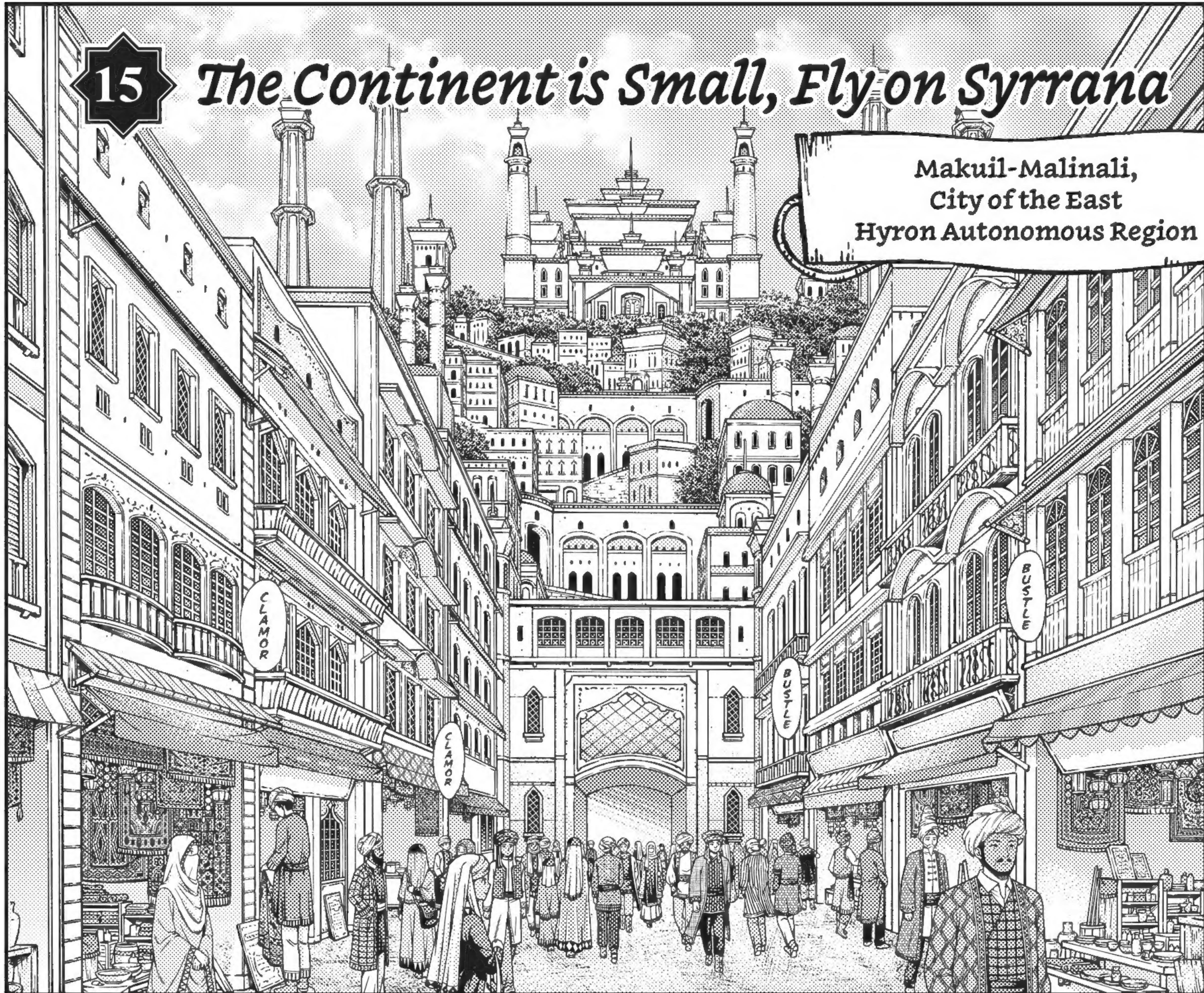
*And of  
those  
myriad  
amassers  
and  
galleries...*



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# The Continent is Small, Fly on Syrrana

Makuil-Malinali,  
City of the East  
Hyron Autonomous Region

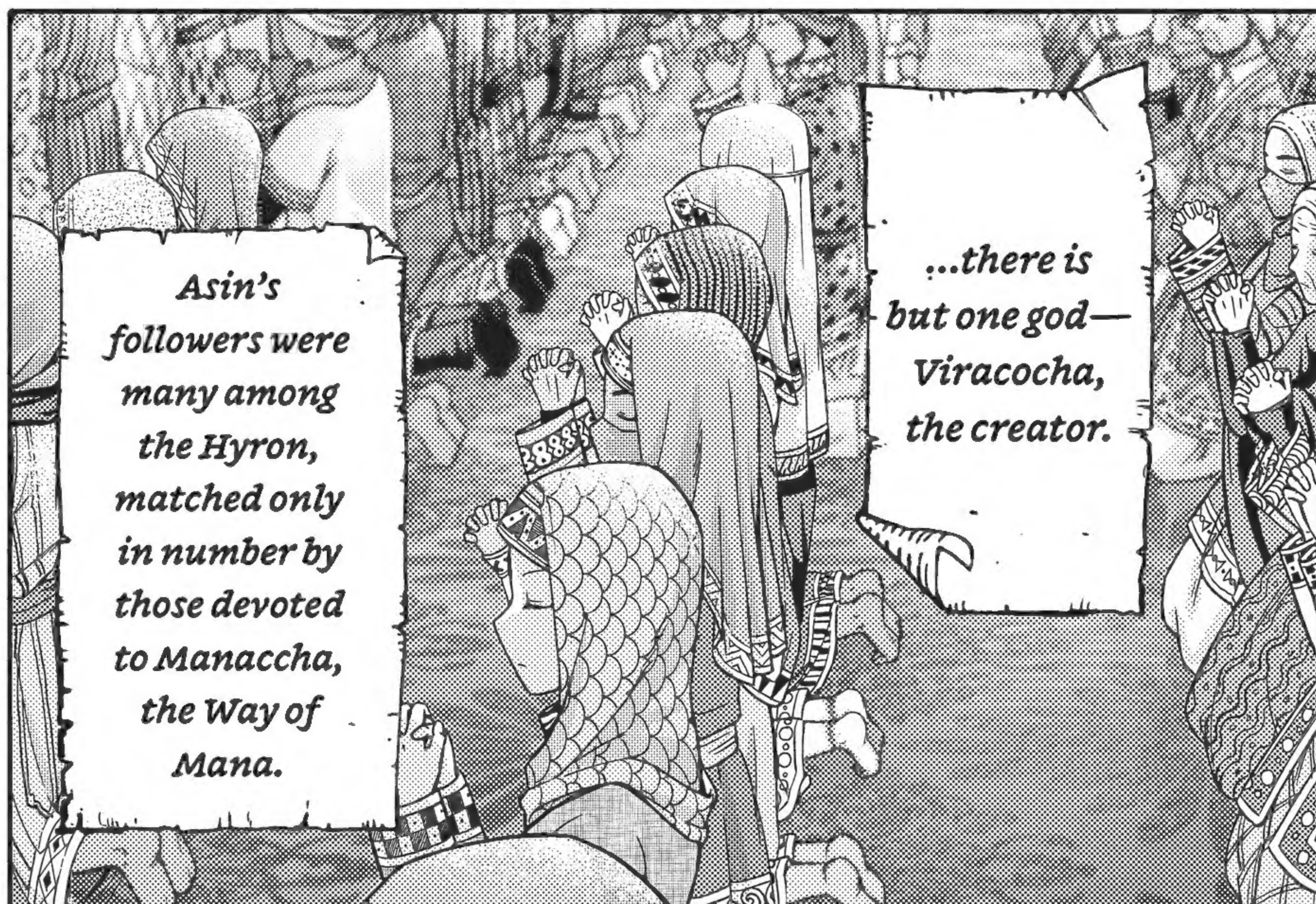
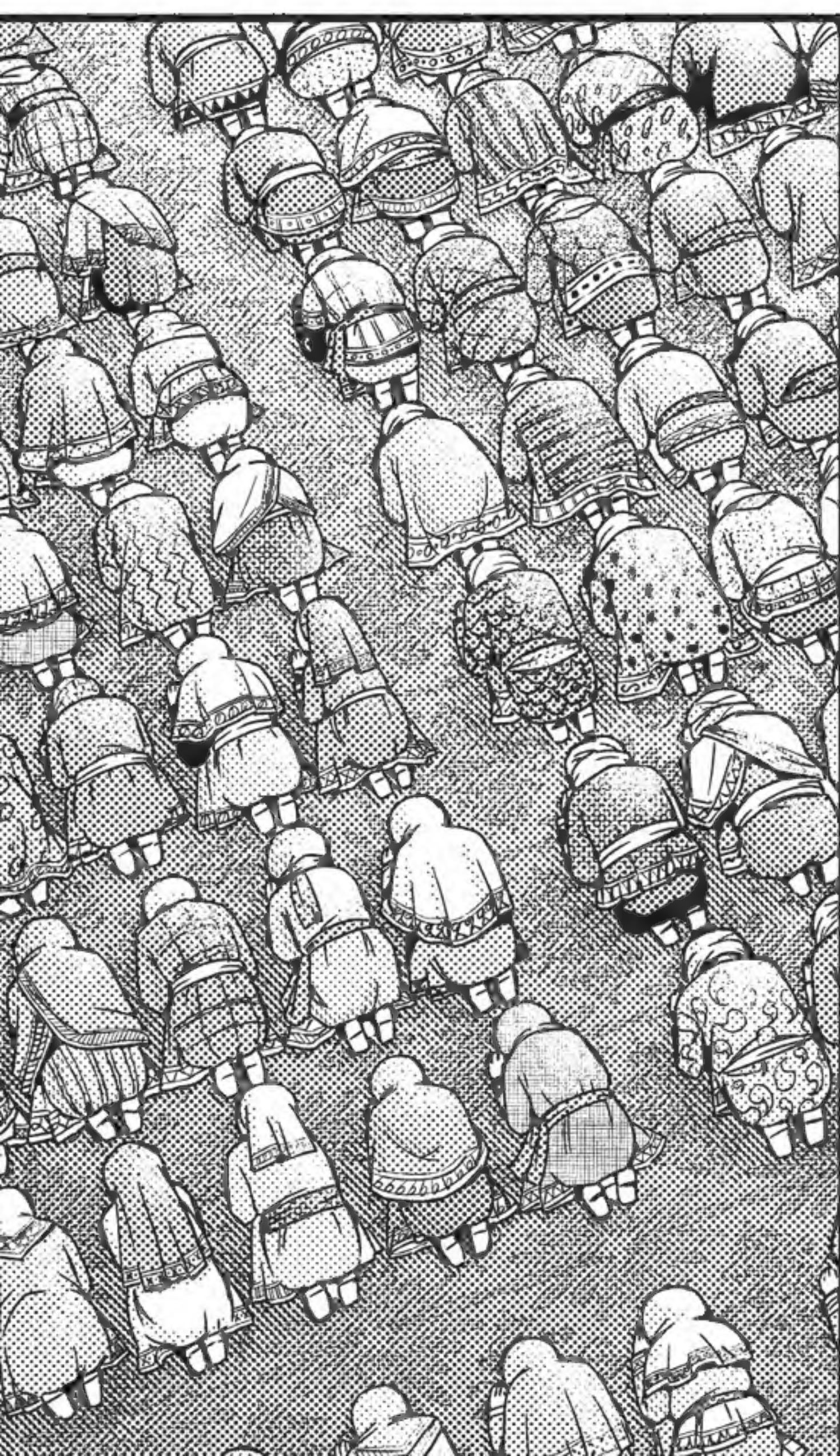


Hikinnawai, the Eastern Perch  
Temple of the Asin Faith





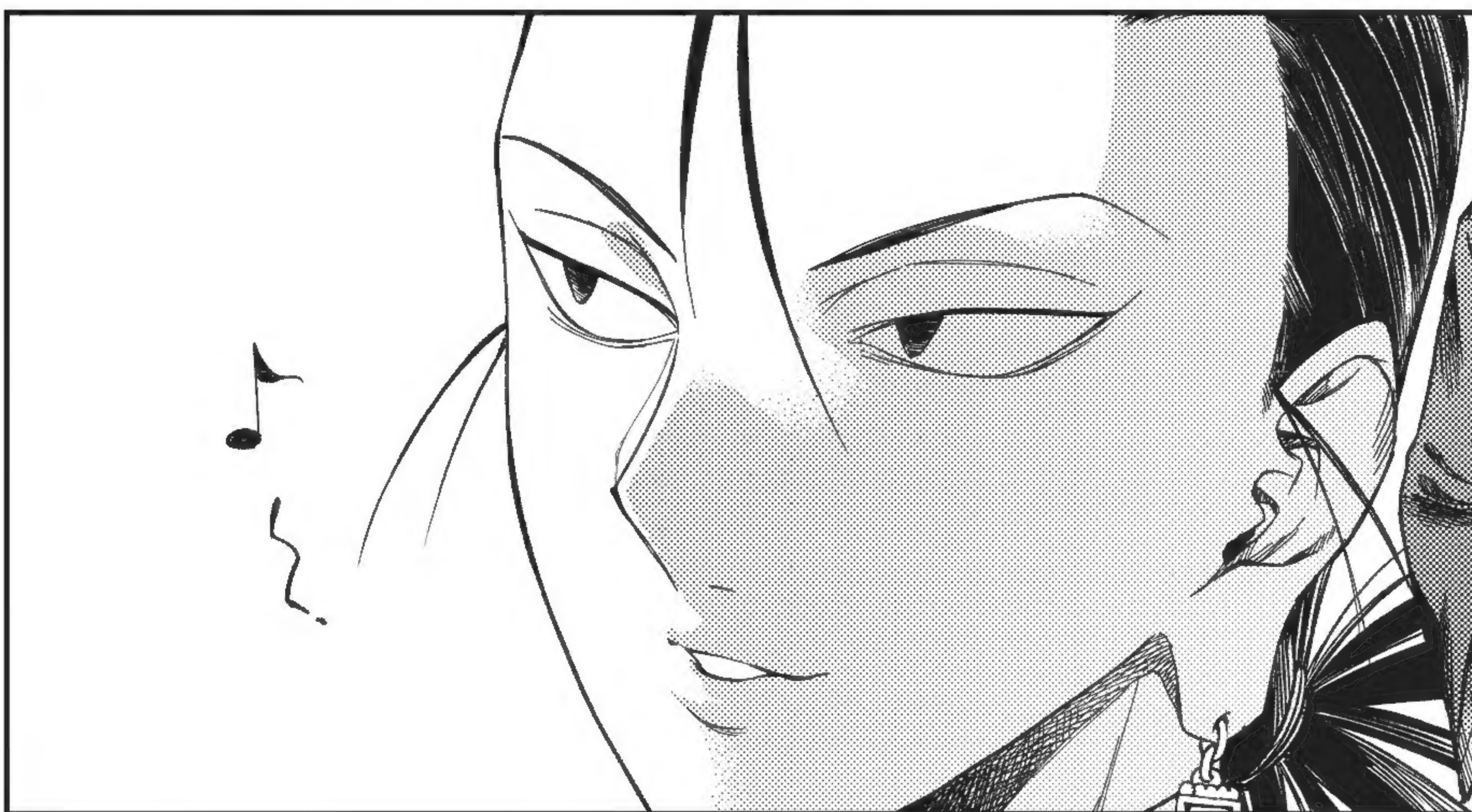
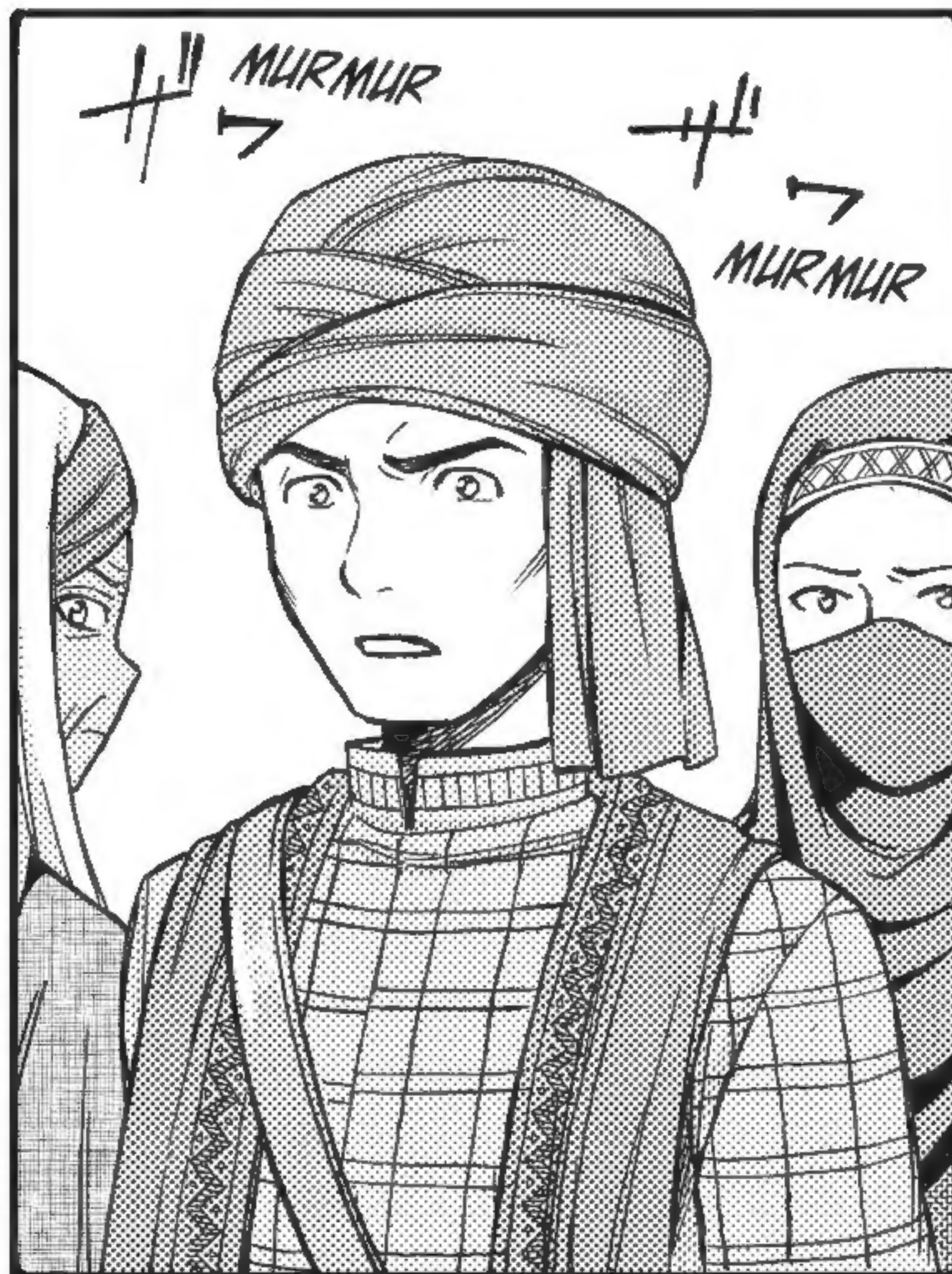
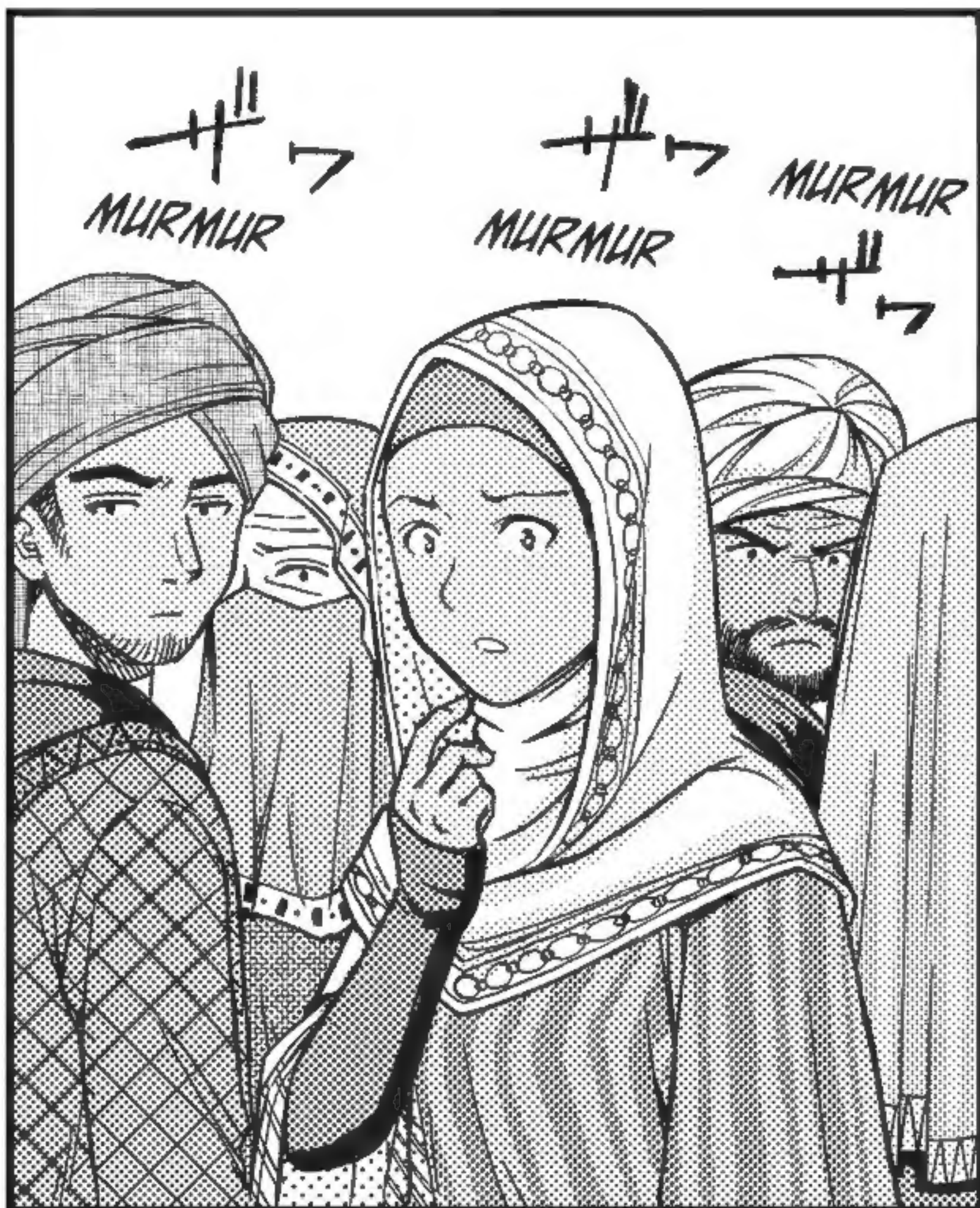
*In the  
religion  
of Asin...*



*Asin's  
followers were  
many among  
the Hyron,  
matched only  
in number by  
those devoted  
to Manaccha,  
the Way of  
Mana.*

*...there is  
but one god—  
Viracocha,  
the creator.*



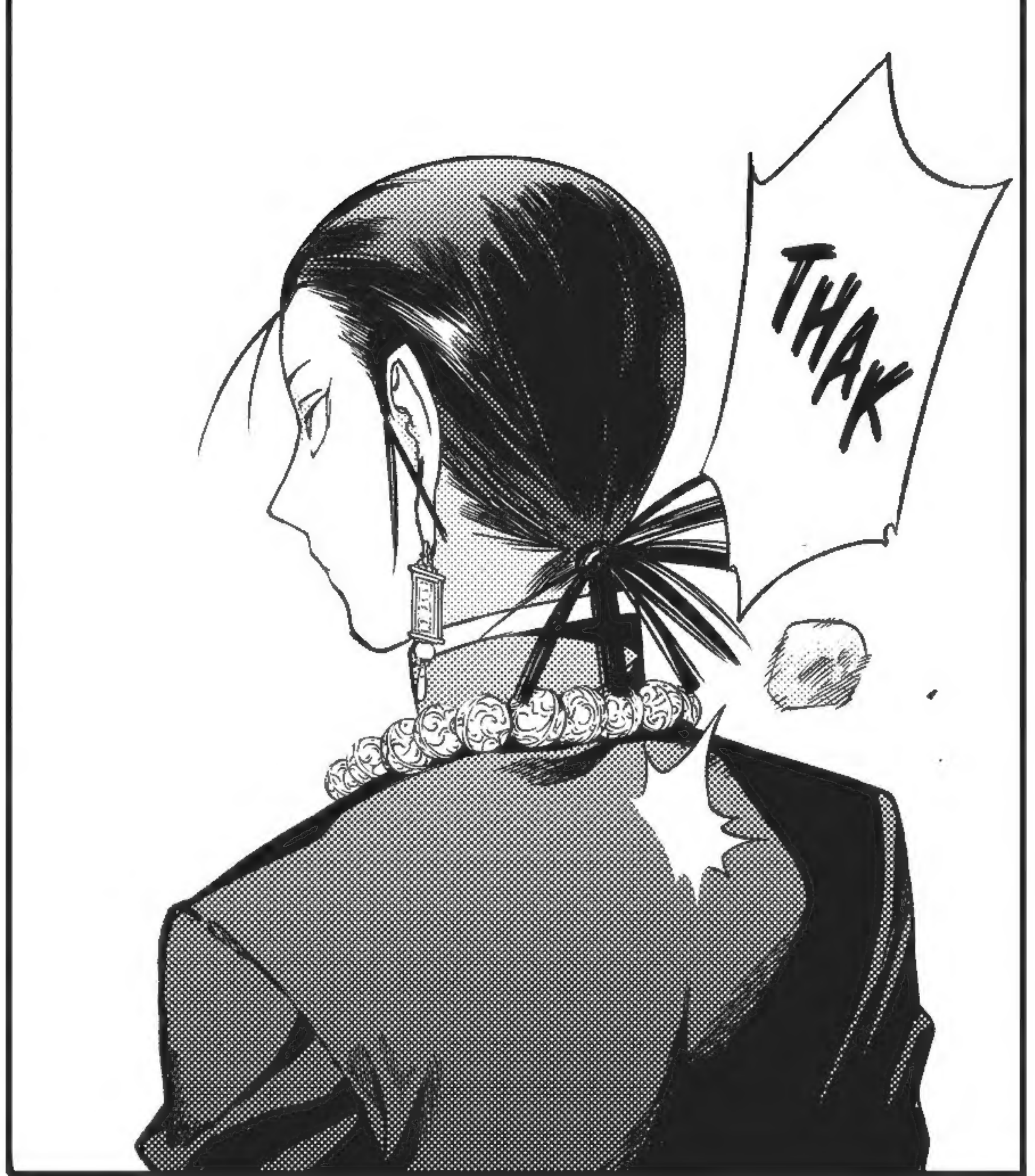
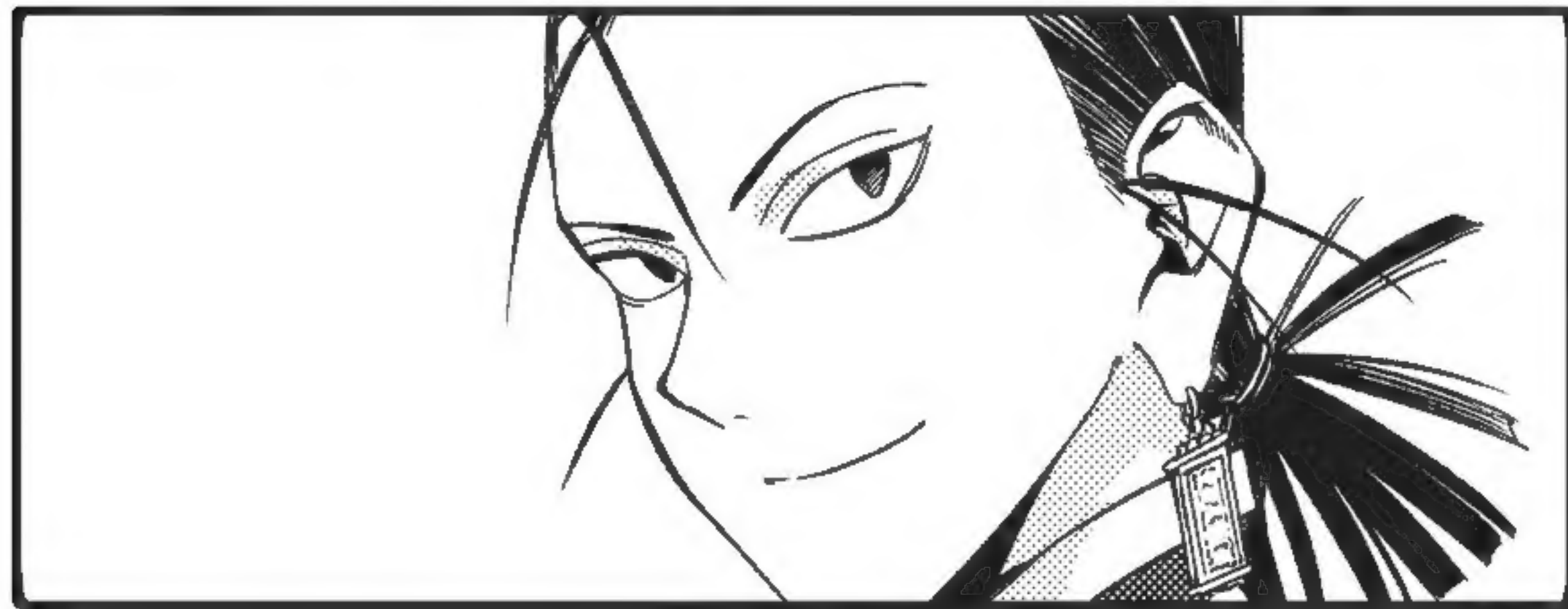




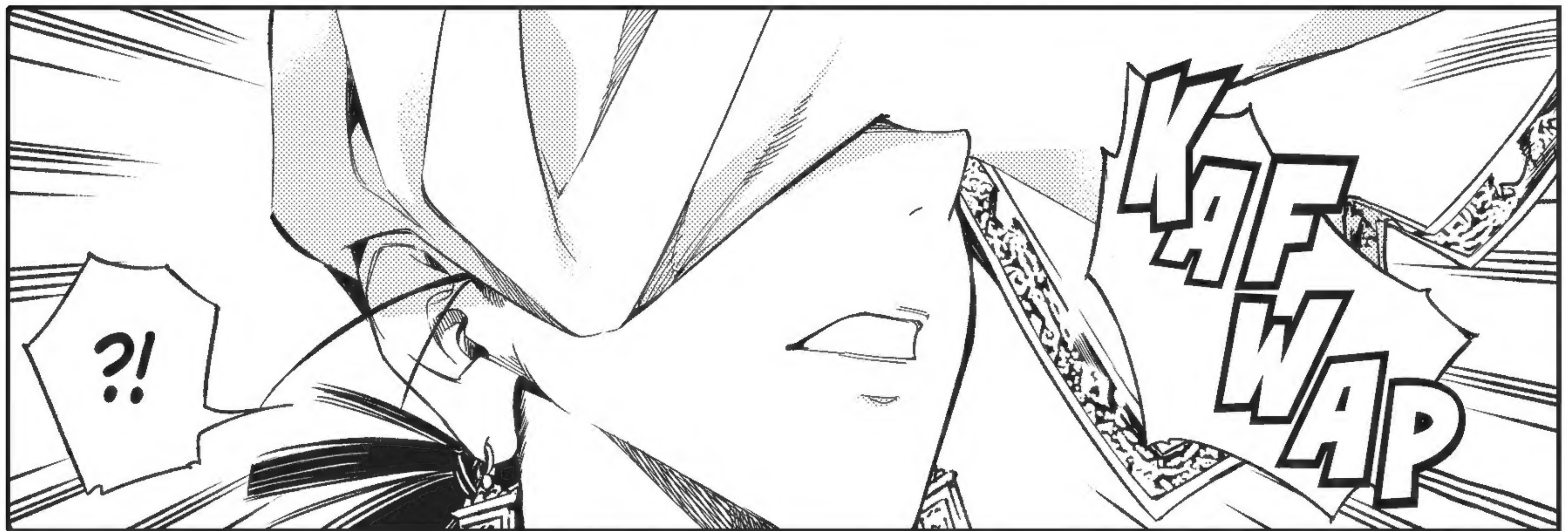


AHAHAHAHA!

GET  
LOST,  
SLANT-  
EYES!



THAK



?!



Weirdo.

I CAN'T  
HELP IT!  
IT'S SO FUN  
SEEING THE  
REALLY  
**DEVOUT**  
BELIEVERS  
REACT TO  
OUTSID-  
ERS.

Ah  
ha  
ha!



ARE  
THEY  
...?!

KRNCH

KRNCH

ERP!

UH-OH!  
SOMEONE'S  
IN TROUBLE  
AGAIN!



DID I NOT MAKE  
MYSELF CLEAR?  
YOU ARE HERE  
AS A KAFNA, SO  
DRESS AS ONE.  
AT ALL TIMES.







RESTRAIN YOURSELF, MAGUS.

YOUR SERVICES SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,  
LIAISONS OFFICE  
AYLBA CANHEL

MAYBE I'LL FINALLY GET TO BREW UP A STORM!

CENTRAL LIBRARY,  
PROTECTIONS OFFICE  
MAHUA TETED

SHALL WE HEAD ON IN, THEN?

CENTRAL LIBRARY,  
JUDICIAL OFFICE  
KAZ BLAK

THE KAFNA ARE HERE!

KRNCH KRNCH KRNCH

IT'S THE KAFNA!

TO WHAT DO WE OWE THIS HONOR?

DEAR ME. HOW VERY UNEXPECTED.

Makuil-Malinali Public Library

CARETAKER  
YOL CUATT





IT'S ALL FULLY AUTHORIZED. HERE. OUR WRIT OF INVESTIGATION.

YES, MA'AM!

TMP

LAY THEM OUT OVER THERE, PLEASE.

WE'RE CONDUCTING AN ON-SITE INVESTIGATION.

TMP

NOW SEE HERE...!

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?!



*Shelving Bias*

*A violation of the Library Code, wherein certain books are intentionally made unavailable for consumption.*

WE RECEIVED A COMPLAINT THAT THIS BRANCH MAY BE ENGAGED IN SHELVING BIAS.

AND OUR PRELIMINARY FINDINGS APPEARED TO SUPPORT THAT CLAIM.



*Removing all books aligned with a dissenting position or arranging them in a manner that makes them difficult to find is strictly forbidden.*

*For example, books upholding a given theory as true must be shelved in the same section as books denouncing that same belief.*

*By Central Library mandate, books are to be arranged according to certain rules.*

SHRF...





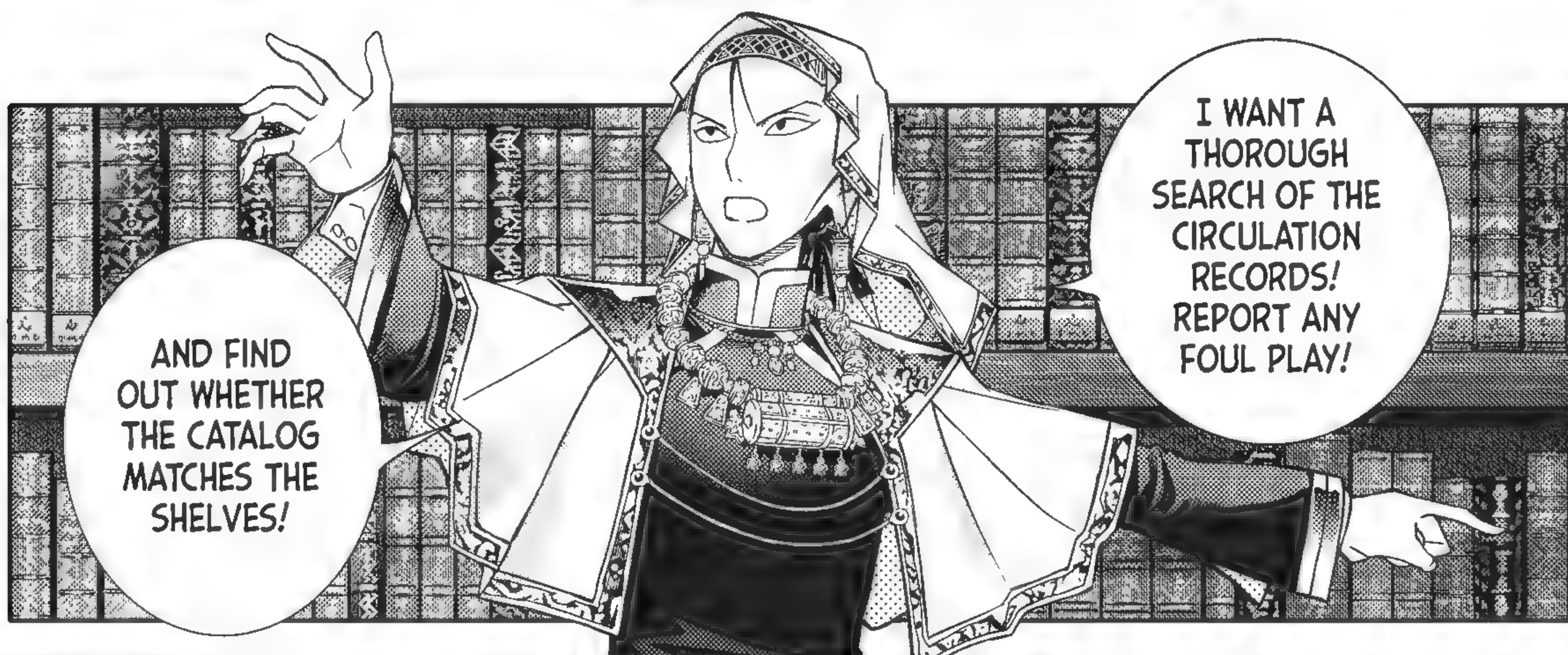
MOVE  
ASIDE,  
FELLA!  
WE HAVE  
WORK  
TO DO!

ERP!



DEPART AT  
ONCE. YOU  
MAY PROCEED  
WITH THE  
INVESTIGATION  
TOMORROW.

ARRIVING  
HERE  
WITHOUT  
NOTICE  
IS MOST  
DISRUPTIVE.



AND FIND  
OUT WHETHER  
THE CATALOG  
MATCHES THE  
SHELVES!

I WANT A  
THOROUGH  
SEARCH OF THE  
CIRCULATION  
RECORDS!  
REPORT ANY  
FOUL PLAY!



SIR BLAKK,  
WE'VE FOUND  
SOMETHING.



EVEN IF THEY'RE  
ON THE SHELVES,  
WE STILL NEED TO  
CHECK THEM OVER.  
LOOK FOR MISSING  
PAGES! BLACKENED  
PASSAGES!



BEGIN WITH  
TITLES WE  
OUTLINED  
BEFORE-  
HAND.



*Clipping*

*A violation of the Library Code, wherein the names of individuals who check out certain books are recorded and indexed.*

IT APPEARS TO IDENTIFY THOSE CHECKING OUT BOOKS BY WRITERS CRITICAL OF ASIN.

WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A CLIP LIST. Well done!

NOW IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF WHO THEY'VE BEEN SHARING THIS WITH.

MY, MY.

KRACKLE

YIPE!

KREEK...

...

MURMUR

MURMUR

BUSTLE

BUSTLE

SHELF TWO IS DONE!

DON'T TRY ANYTHING SNEAKY, OR YOU'LL BE IN FOR A SHOCK.

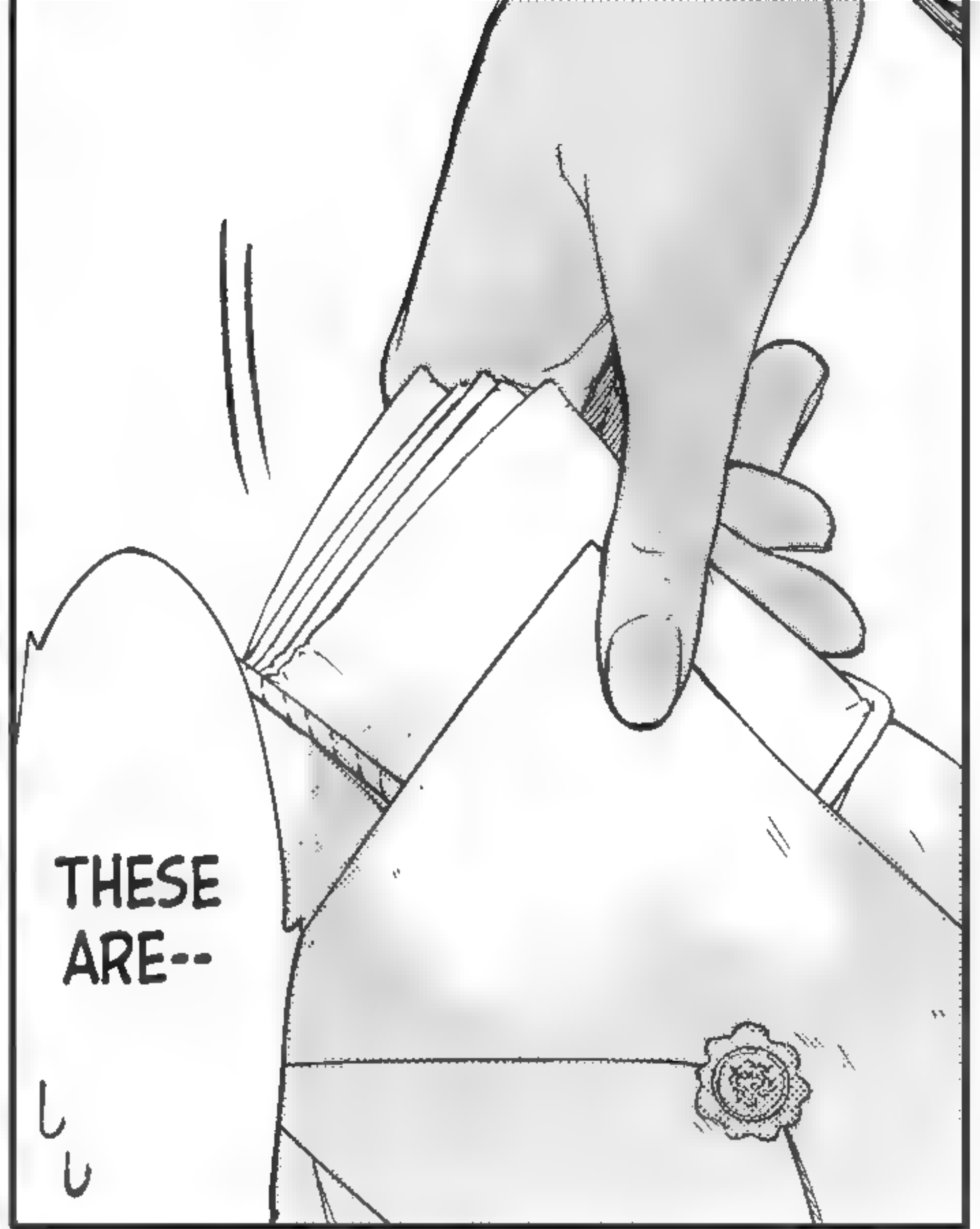
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

KSOOO...

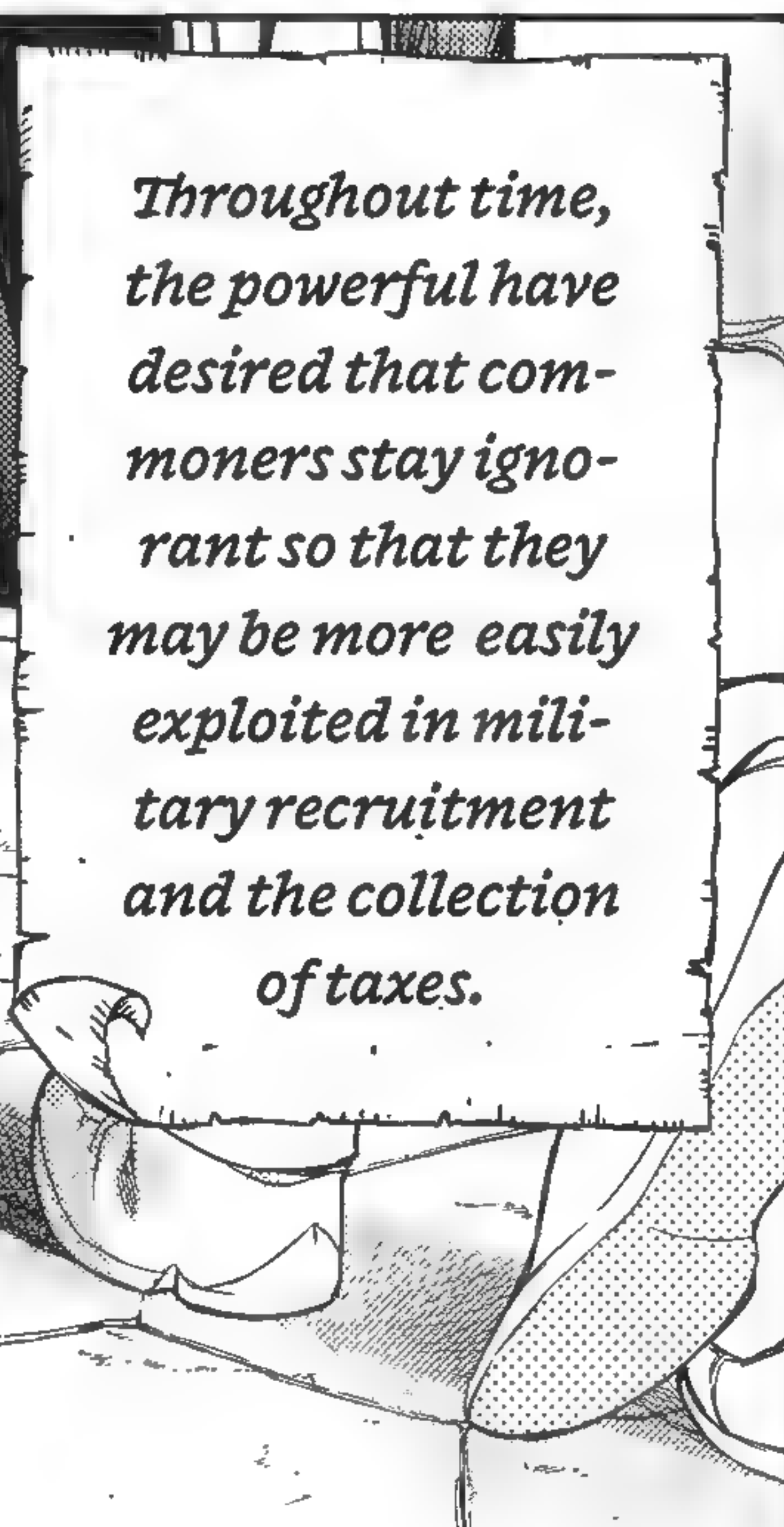
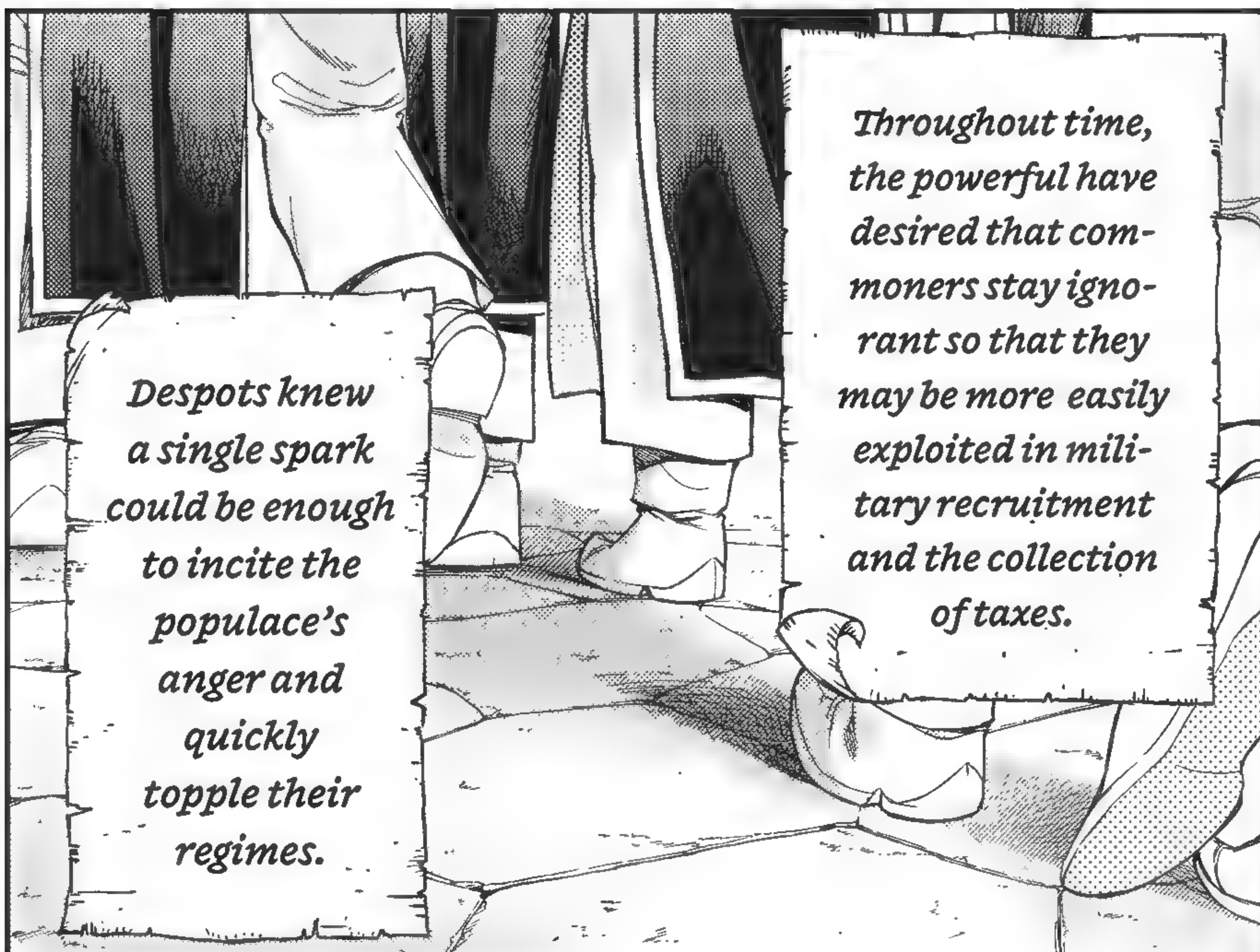
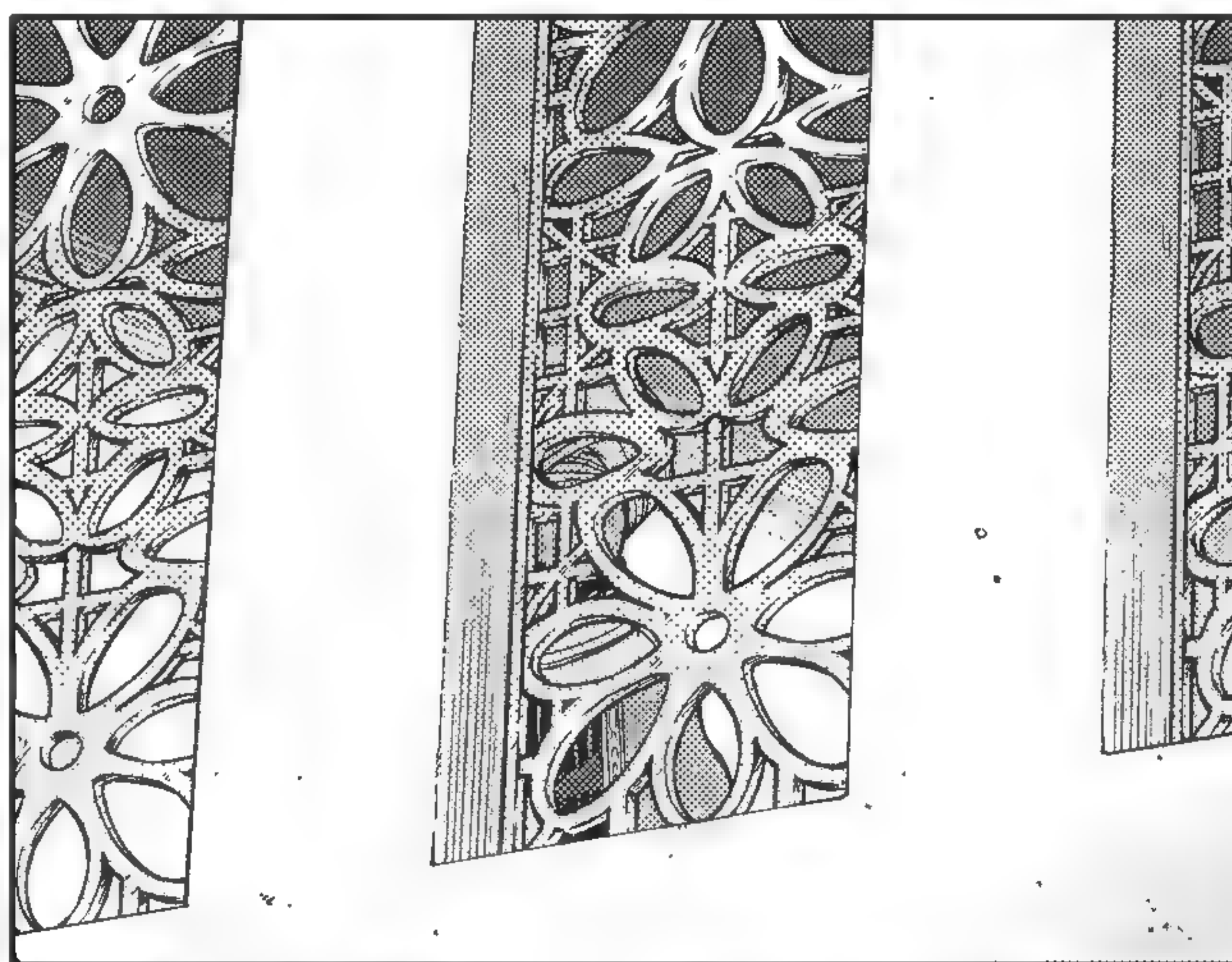
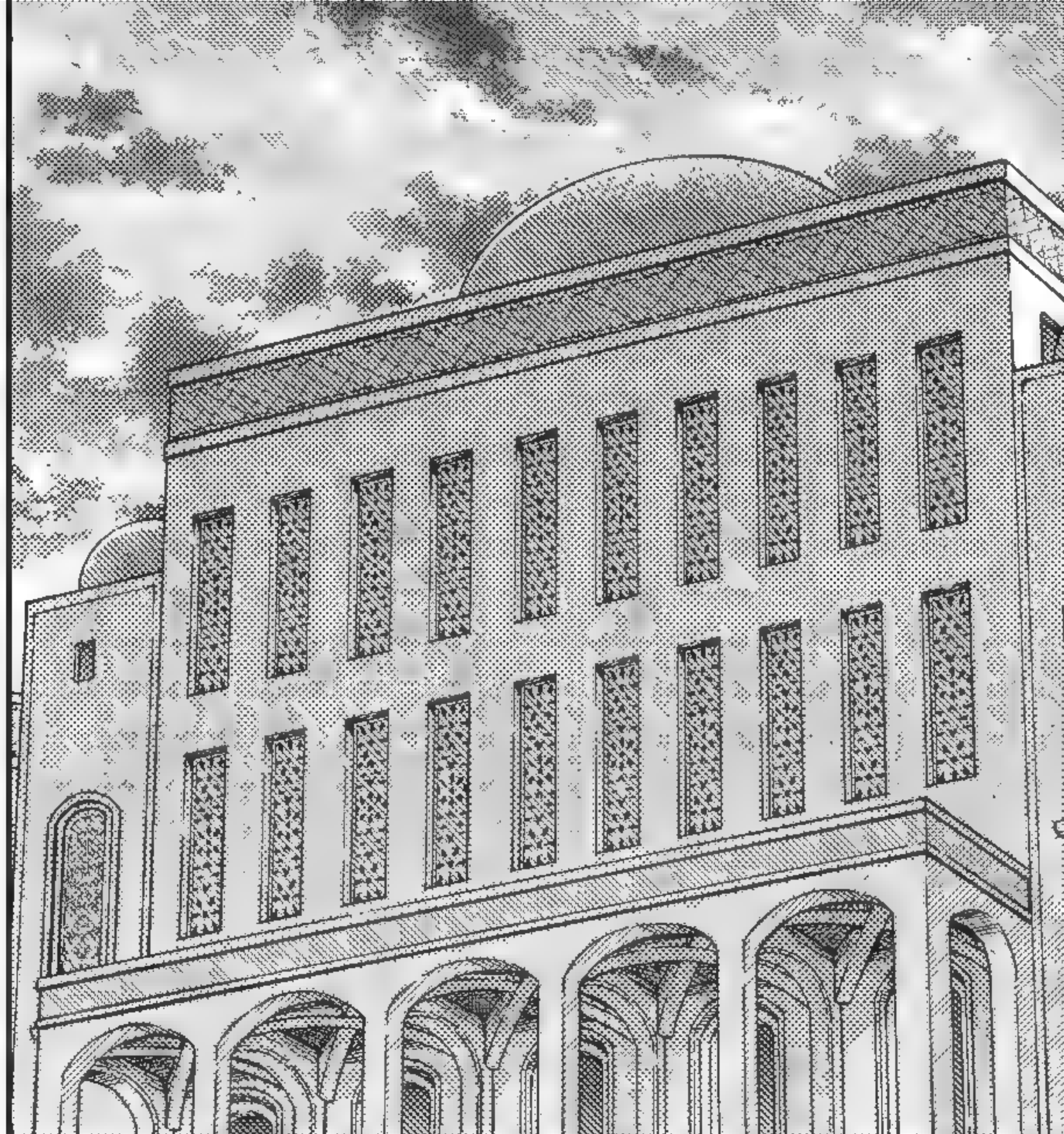
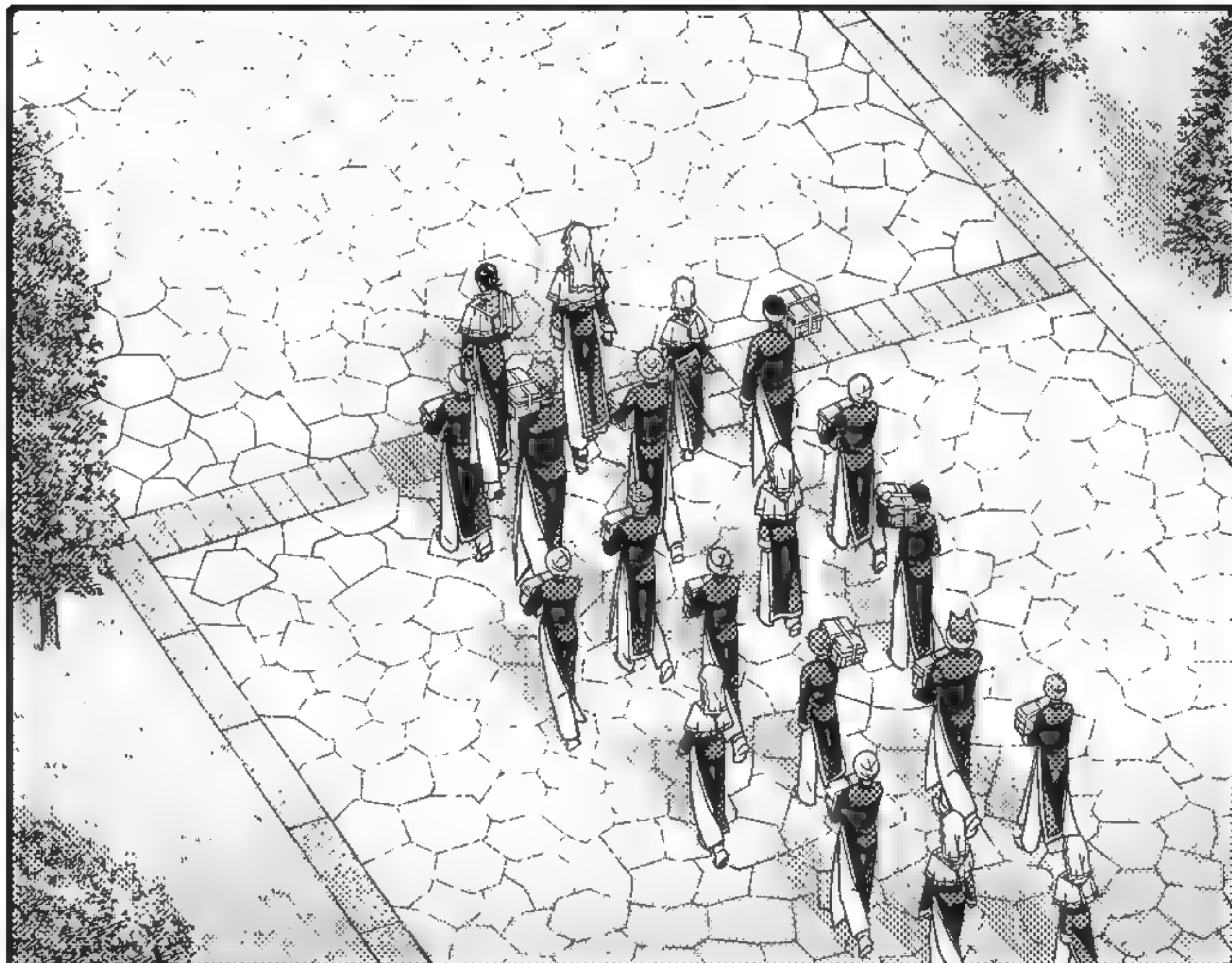
KSH

FWSH

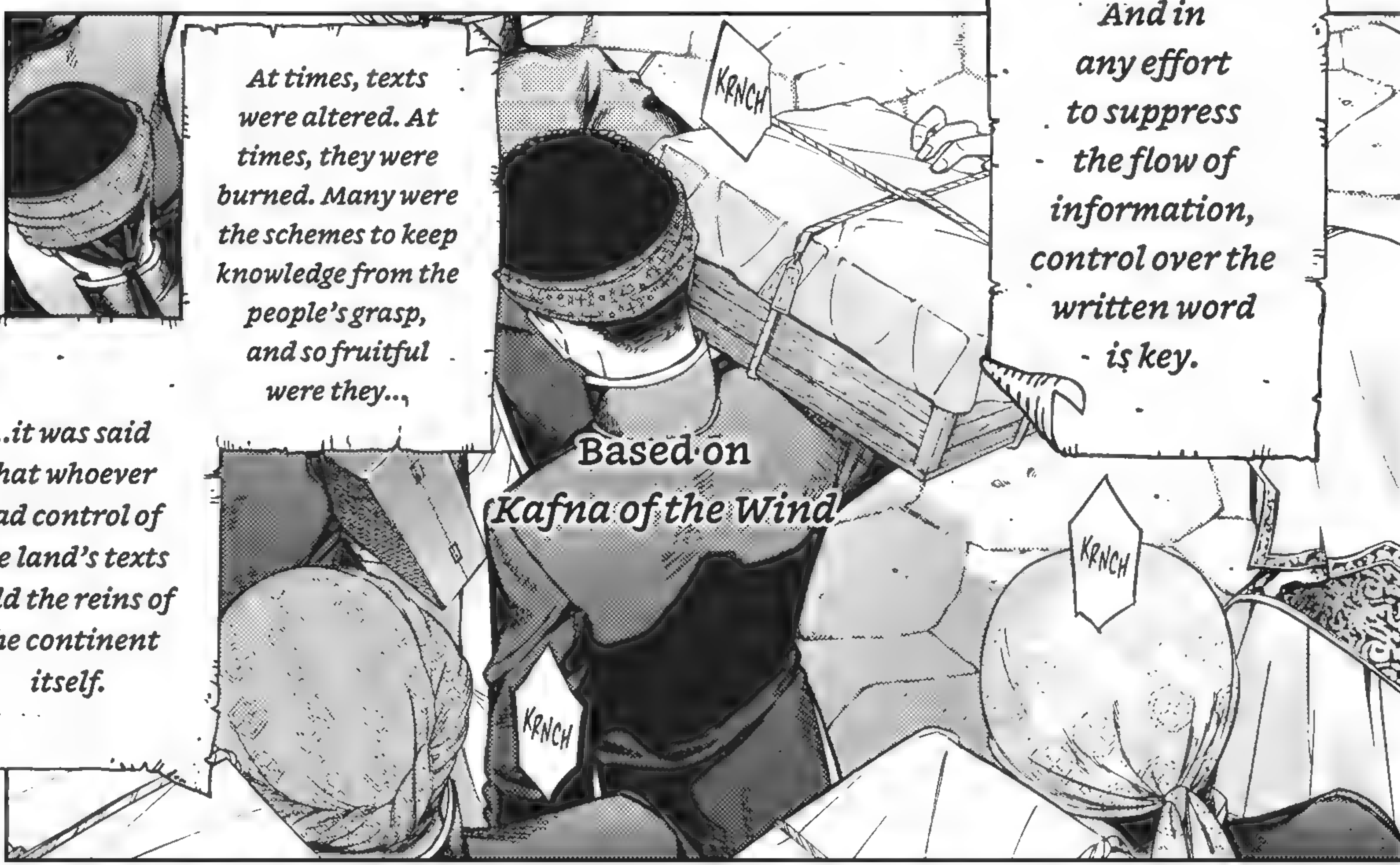













At times, texts  
were altered. At  
times, they were  
burned. Many were  
the schemes to keep  
knowledge from the  
people's grasp,  
and so fruitful  
were they...

...it was said  
that whoever  
had control of  
the land's texts  
held the reins of  
the continent  
itself.

Based on  
*Kafna of the Wind*

And in  
any effort  
to suppress  
the flow of  
information,  
control over the  
written word  
is key.



In the  
words of  
a certain  
magus...

...the  
world  
itself."

by  
Sophie Shwimm

"To protect  
a text...

...is to  
protect...

KRNCH





† Magus of the Library †





Magus

of

the

Library

4



Part 2

"Days in Training at the Central Library"

Part 2

"Days in Training at the Central Library"







YOWII  
OF THE SYRRANA

WRRSH  
+ +



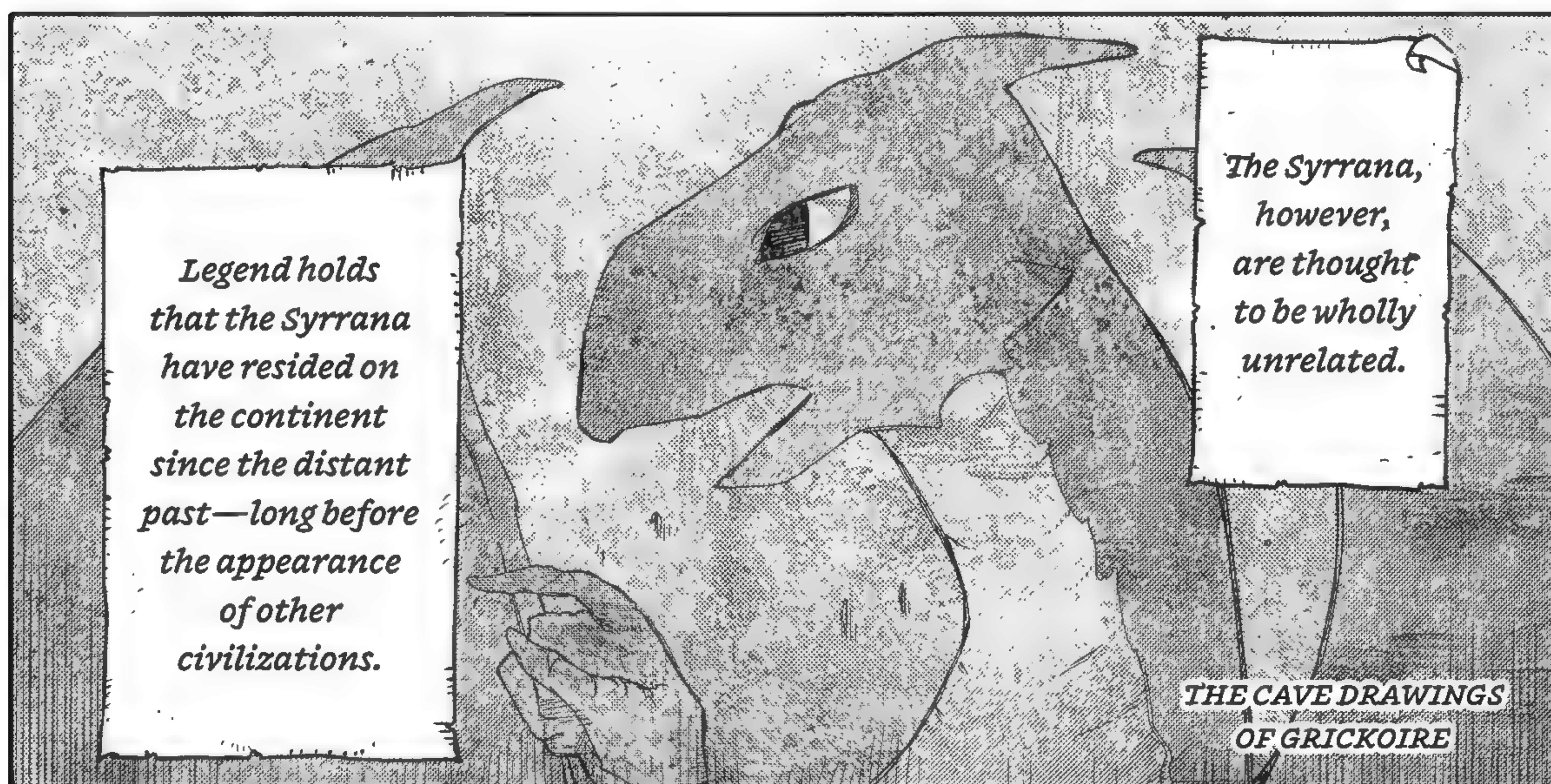




*...set forth  
by the Great  
Thinker Zarud,  
known as the  
"Origin of  
Tharms."*

*The theory holds  
that the many  
varied races  
peopling the  
continent today  
derive from a  
single, small  
creature that  
lived long ago.*

*A lobino, the creature posited by  
Zarud to be the ancestor of all  
humanoid races.*

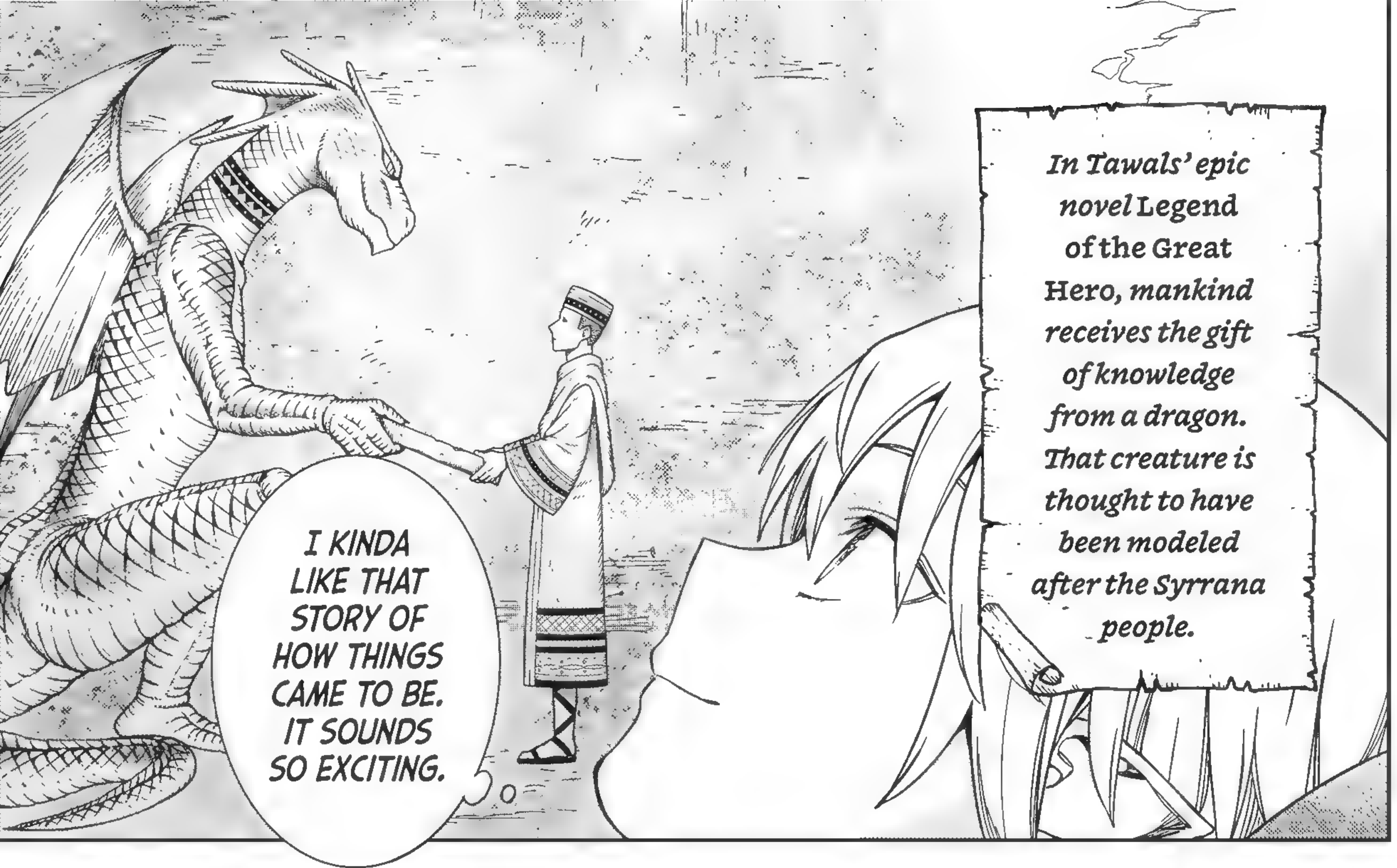


*Legend holds  
that the Syrrana  
have resided on  
the continent  
since the distant  
past—long before  
the appearance  
of other  
civilizations.*

*The Syrrana,  
however,  
are thought  
to be wholly  
unrelated.*

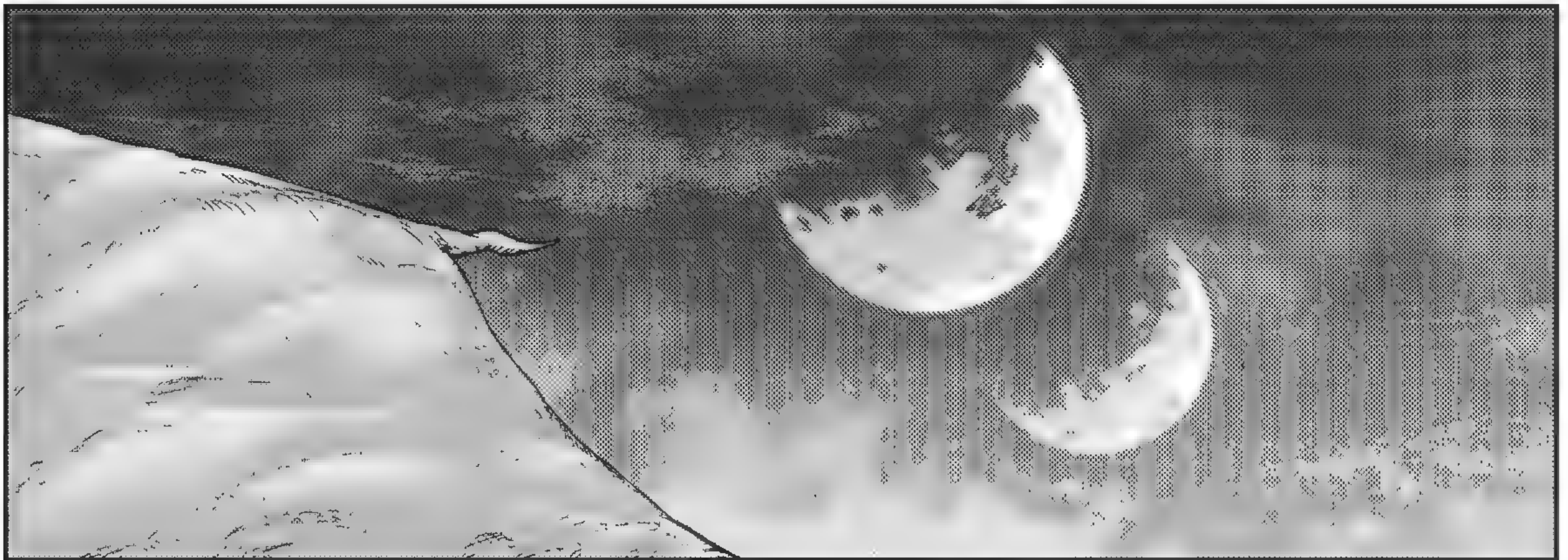
**THE CAVE DRAWINGS  
OF GRICKOIRE**





I KINDA  
LIKE THAT  
STORY OF  
HOW THINGS  
CAME TO BE.  
IT SOUNDS  
SO EXCITING.

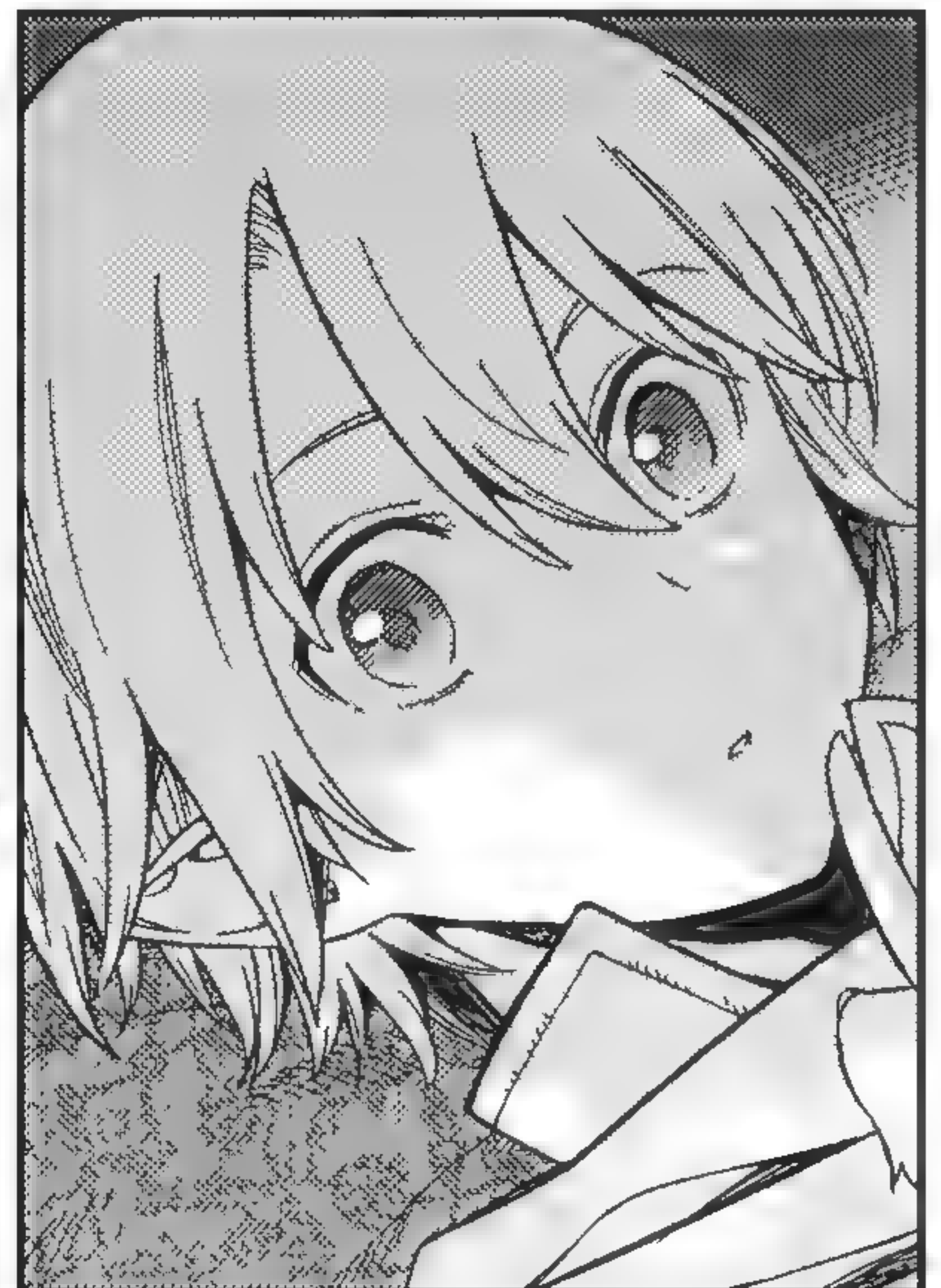
*In Tawals' epic  
novel Legend  
of the Great  
Hero, mankind  
receives the gift  
of knowledge  
from a dragon.  
That creature is  
thought to have  
been modeled  
after the Syrrana  
people.*



MY,  
MY...  
YOU'RE  
QUITE  
PERCEPTIVE,  
AREN'T  
YOU?

ARE  
WE NOT  
HEADED TO  
AFTZAAK?

HUH? THE  
TWIN MOONS  
ARE TO OUR  
RIGHT. THEY  
SHOULD BE  
DEAD AHEAD.







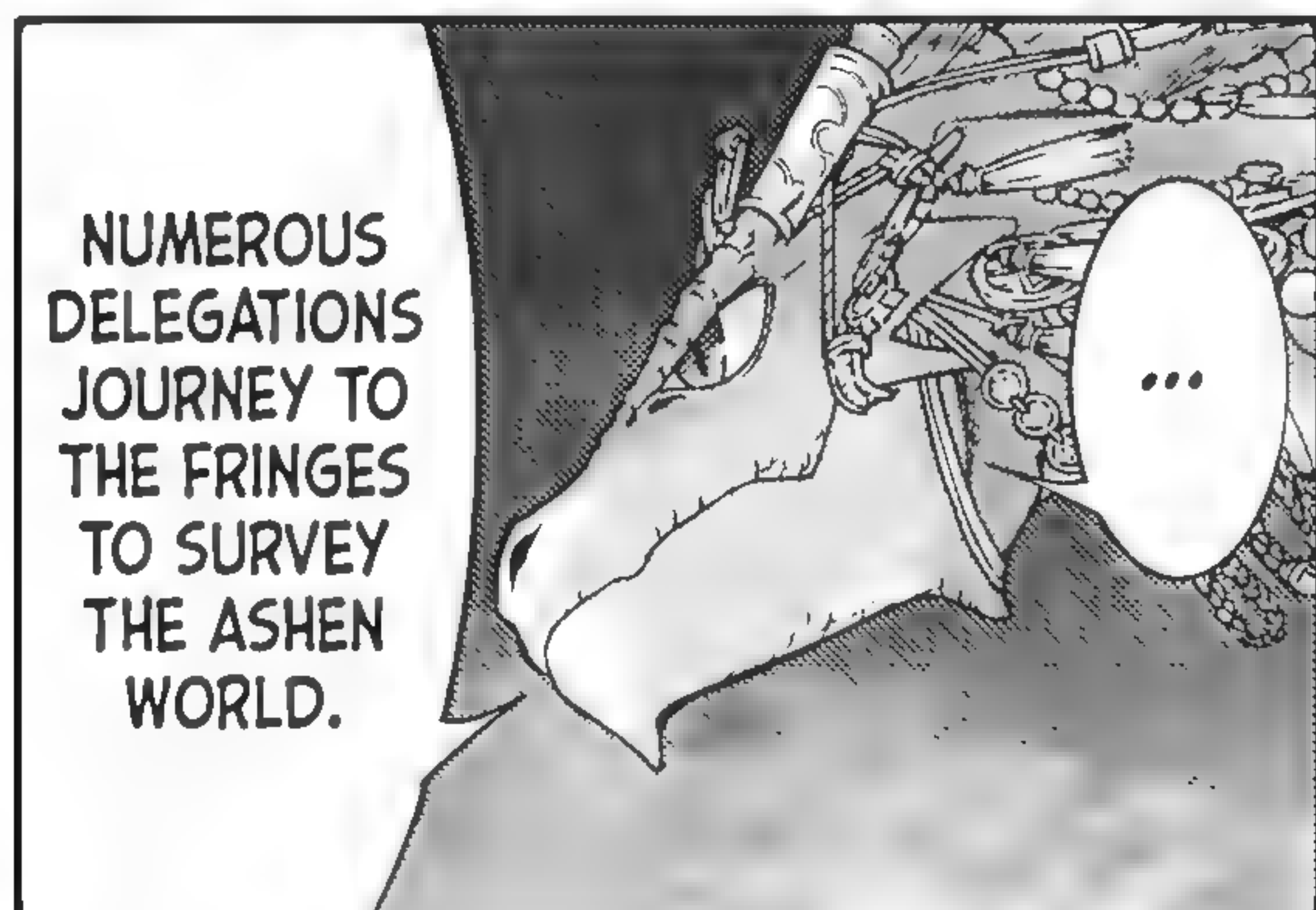




SHIVER...

THESE ARE THE  
SCARS WROUGHT  
BY THE EMISSARY  
OF WORMWOOD,  
STILL SHROUDING  
SO MUCH OF  
THE CONTINENT  
TODAY...

THE ASHEN  
DEATH...



NUMEROUS  
DELEGATIONS  
JOURNEY TO  
THE FRINGES  
TO SURVEY  
THE ASHEN  
WORLD.

...



DOES  
THAT MEAN  
THERE'S  
NO LIFE AT  
ALL DOWN  
THERE?

I'VE  
BEEN TAUGHT  
THAT PEOPLE  
CAN'T SURVIVE  
INSIDE THE  
FOG.



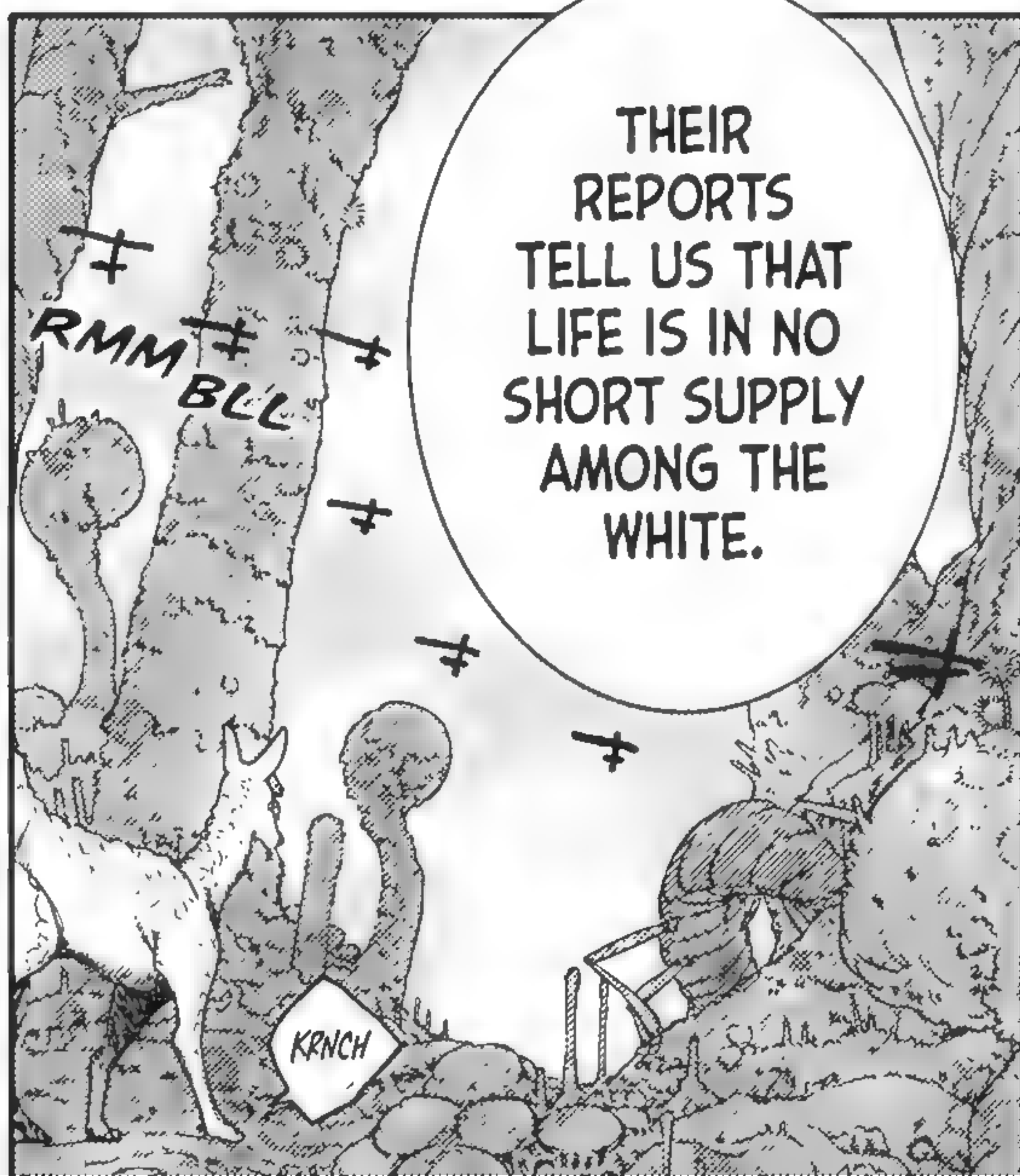
THRMP

YIP  
YIP!



THRRMP

FLINCH



RMM  
BLL

KRNCH

THEIR  
REPORTS  
TELL US THAT  
LIFE IS IN NO  
SHORT SUPPLY  
AMONG THE  
WHITE.





THE SURVEY  
TEAMS REFER  
TO THEM AS  
THE DENIZENS  
OF THE ASH.



BUT OF COURSE.

BEFORE YOU ASK, THOUGH, KNOW THAT THESE EARS ARE DEAF TO ANY PLEAS TO SEE THE SEA.

BUT IF WE'RE SOARING ABOVE THE FOG NOW, DOES THAT MEAN SYRRANA ARE ABLE TO JOURNEY BEYOND THE ASHEN WORLD?!



WAIT!

THIS IS A BURDEN BY THE OTHER RACES BORN AND BORNE.

IN MATTERS OF THE ASHEN WORLD, THE SYRRANA STAND FIRM. WE SHALL NOT LEND AID.

THE ASHEN DEATH

WE SHALL TAKE A SHORT TOUR OF THE NEARBY REGIONAL SEATS BEFORE HEADING INTO AFTZAAK.

AMUN

KALAR

ITZAMNA

BULWARK OF OMEN

ESPLEO

LAKE TATA

BELEHEBEI-TZI

NOW, LET US PROCEED TO OUR NEXT DESTINATION.

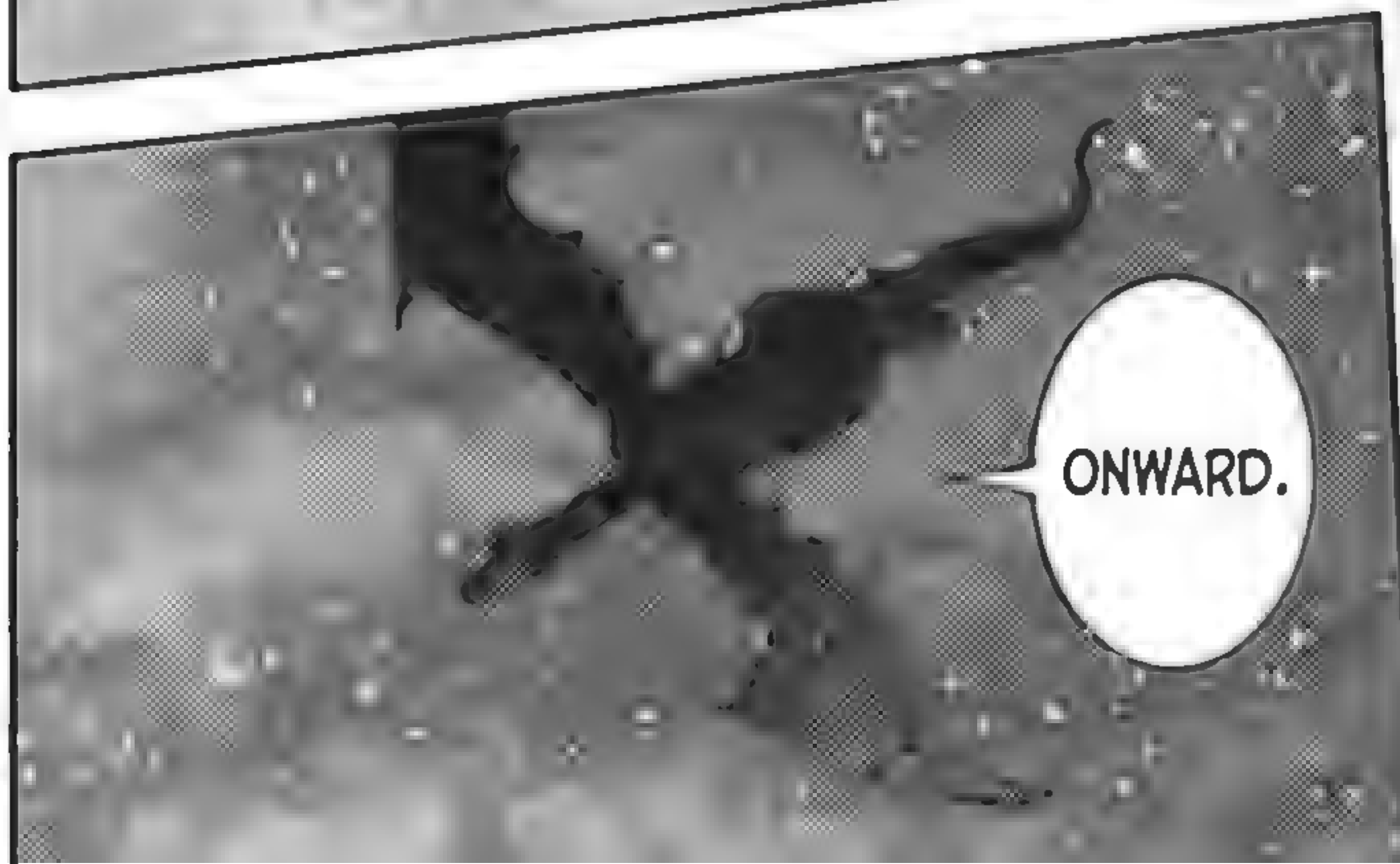
WHERE'S THAT?





THIS IS THE  
CITY OF  
A PEOPLE  
WHO ONCE  
HUGGED THE  
SEA, ONLY TO  
BE DRIVEN  
FROM THEIR  
HOMELANDS  
BY THE  
EMISSARY...

KALAR...



ONWARD.



BEFORE YOU  
LIES KALAR,  
CITY OF THE  
STARS—SEAT  
OF THE RAKTA  
AUTONOMOUS  
REGION.





NOW WE PASS  
THE BORDER  
BETWEEN HYRON  
AND RAKTA LANDS.  
THE STRUCTURE  
BELOW IS THE  
BULWARK  
OF OMEN.



IS  
THAT A  
SHIRT ?

WHAT  
IN THE  
BLAZES



AND  
NEXT...

HEE  
HEE...



THANKS TO THE  
MANA DEPOSITS  
MINED NEARBY,  
THIS BOUNDARY  
IS EVER MIRED  
IN DISPUTE.

ONE MIGHT  
SAY THE WALL  
IS A SYMBOL  
OF THE GREAT  
WAR THAT HAS  
NEVER TRULY  
ENDED.



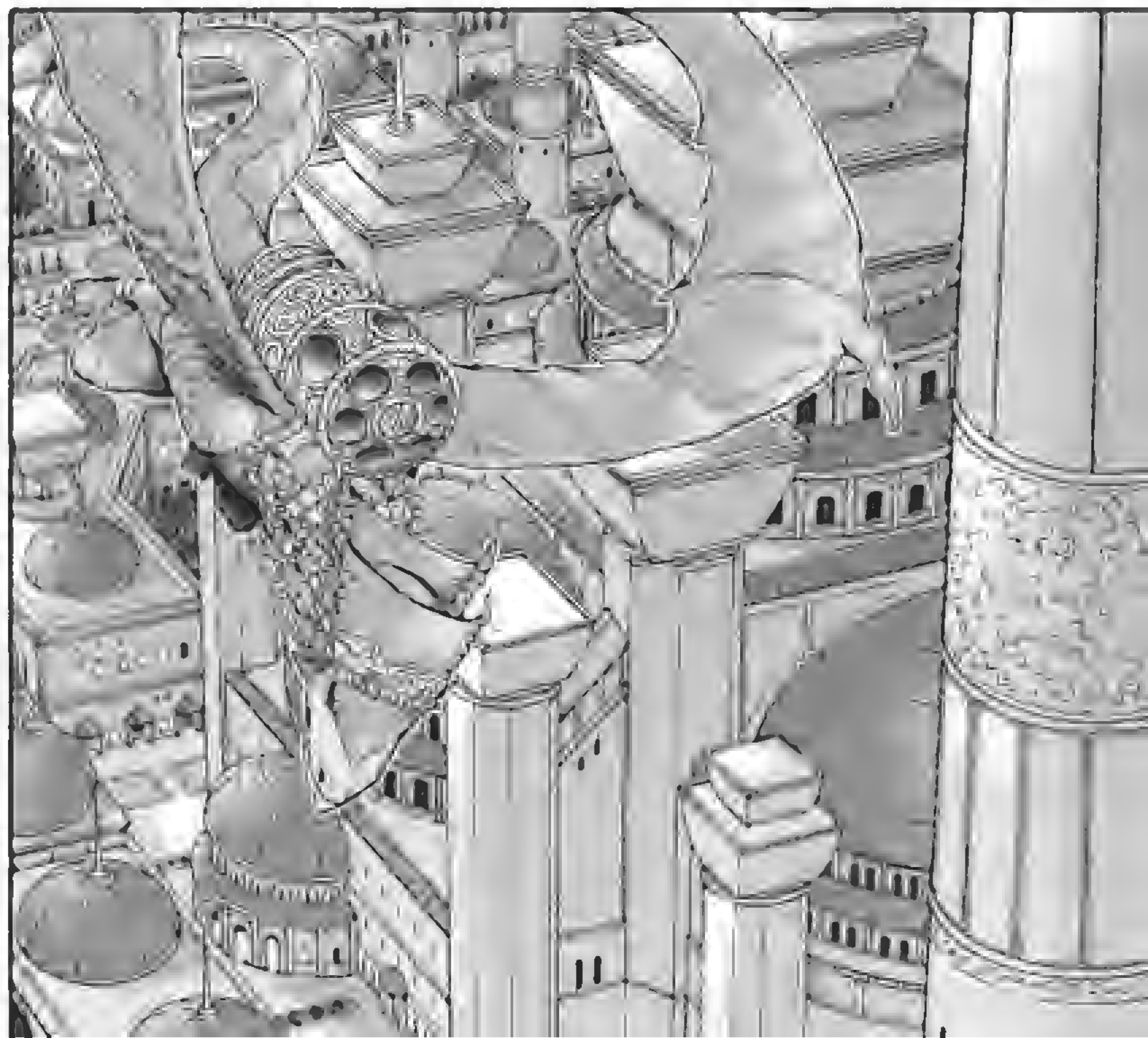


...WE ARRIVE AT  
BELEHEBEI-TZI,  
CITY OF THE  
FATHER. THIS  
IS THE SEAT OF  
THE HYRON.

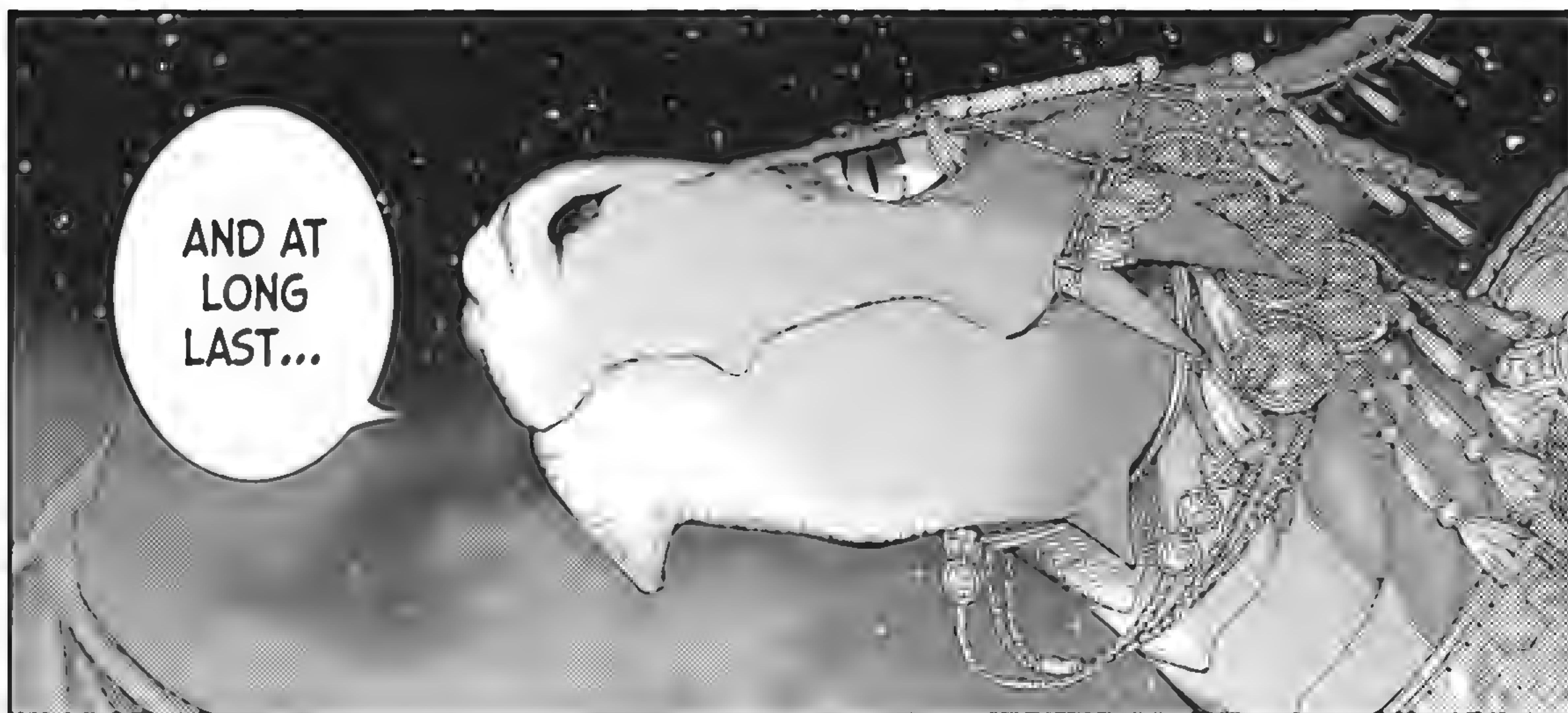


THAT MUST  
BE MAOKAFHUA,  
THE GREEN PERCH.

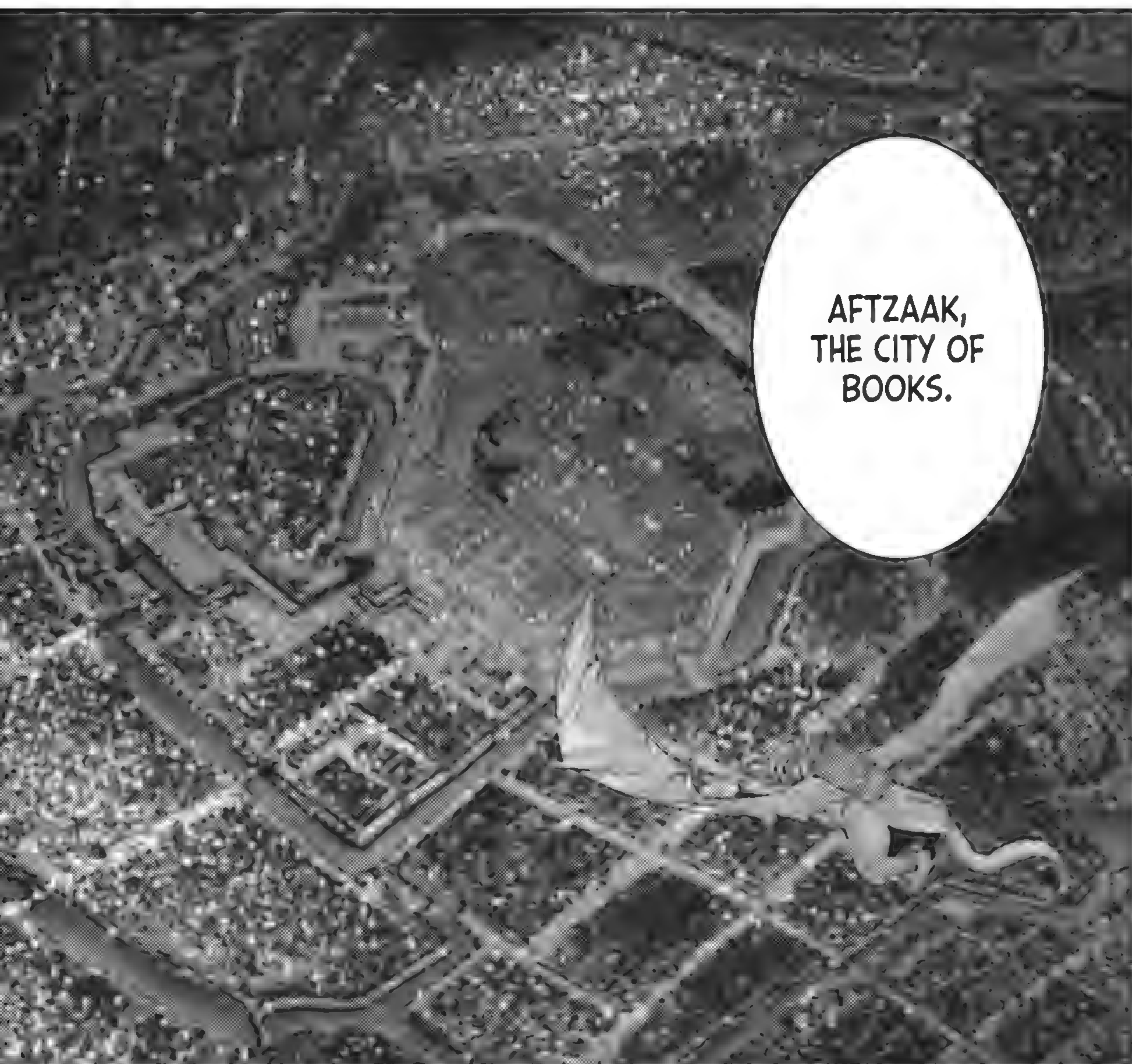
THAT'S THE  
SEAT OF  
THE HYRON  
CENTRAL  
GOVERNMENT.





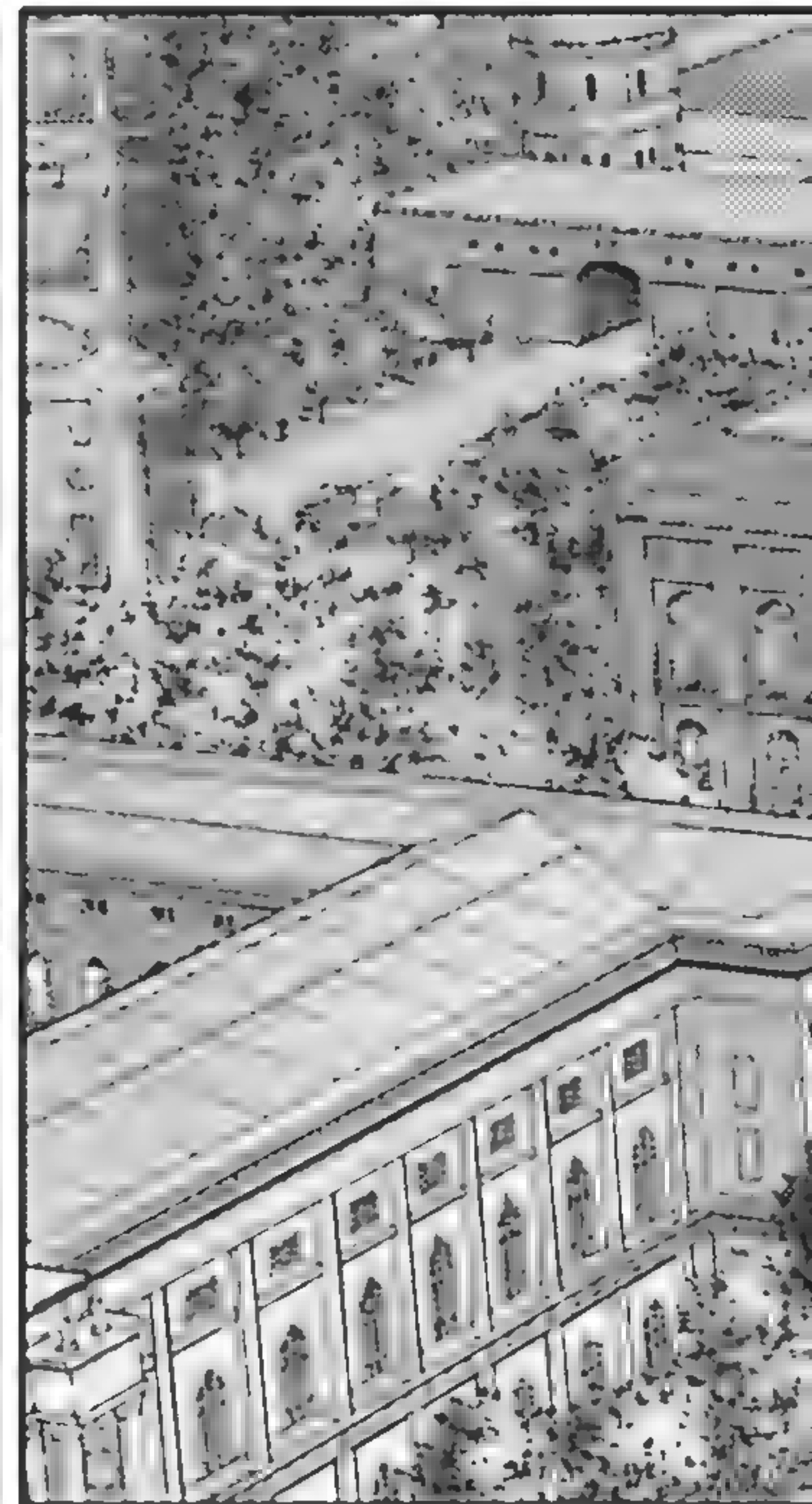
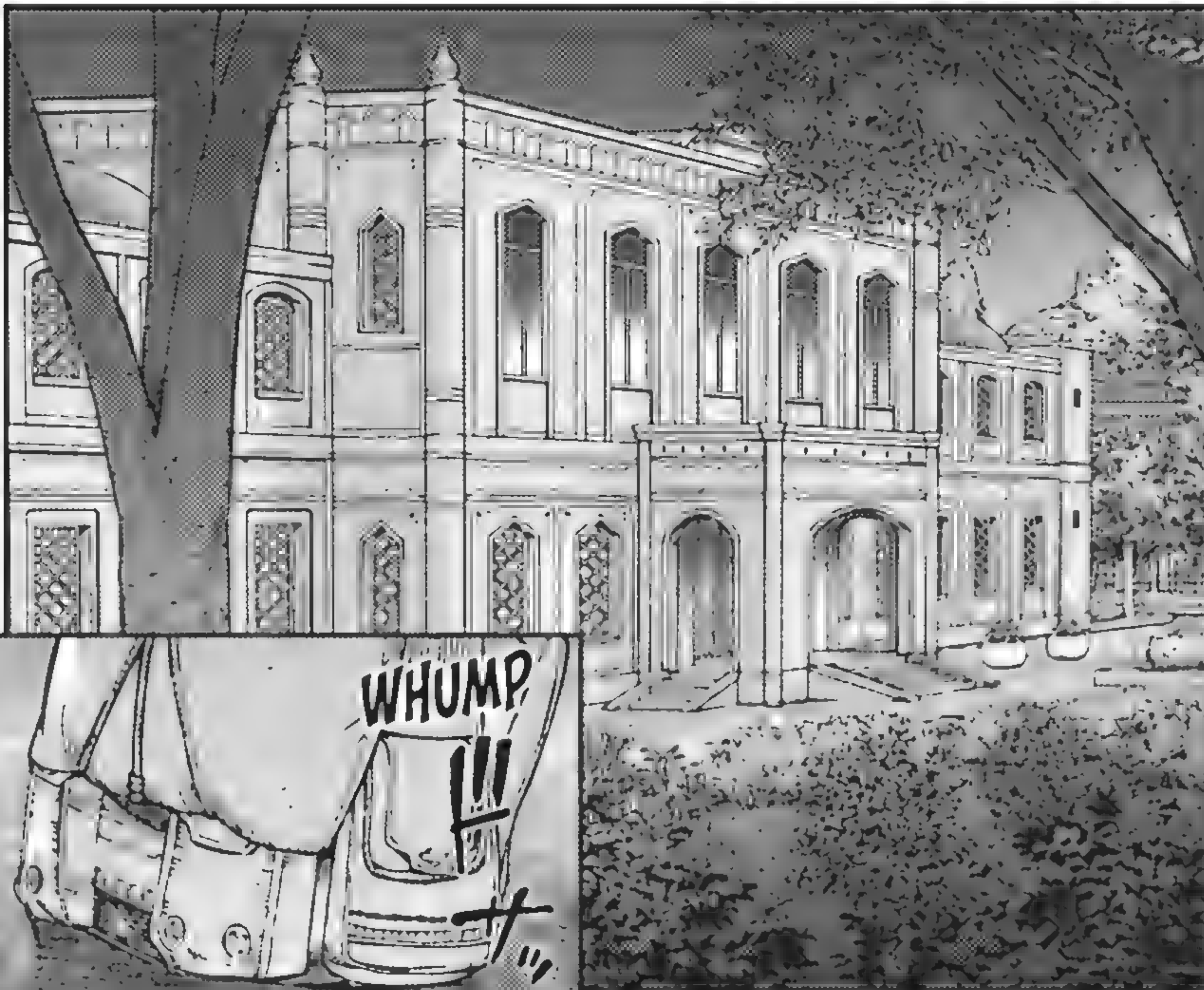


AND AT  
LONG  
LAST...



AFTZAAK,  
THE CITY OF  
BOOKS.



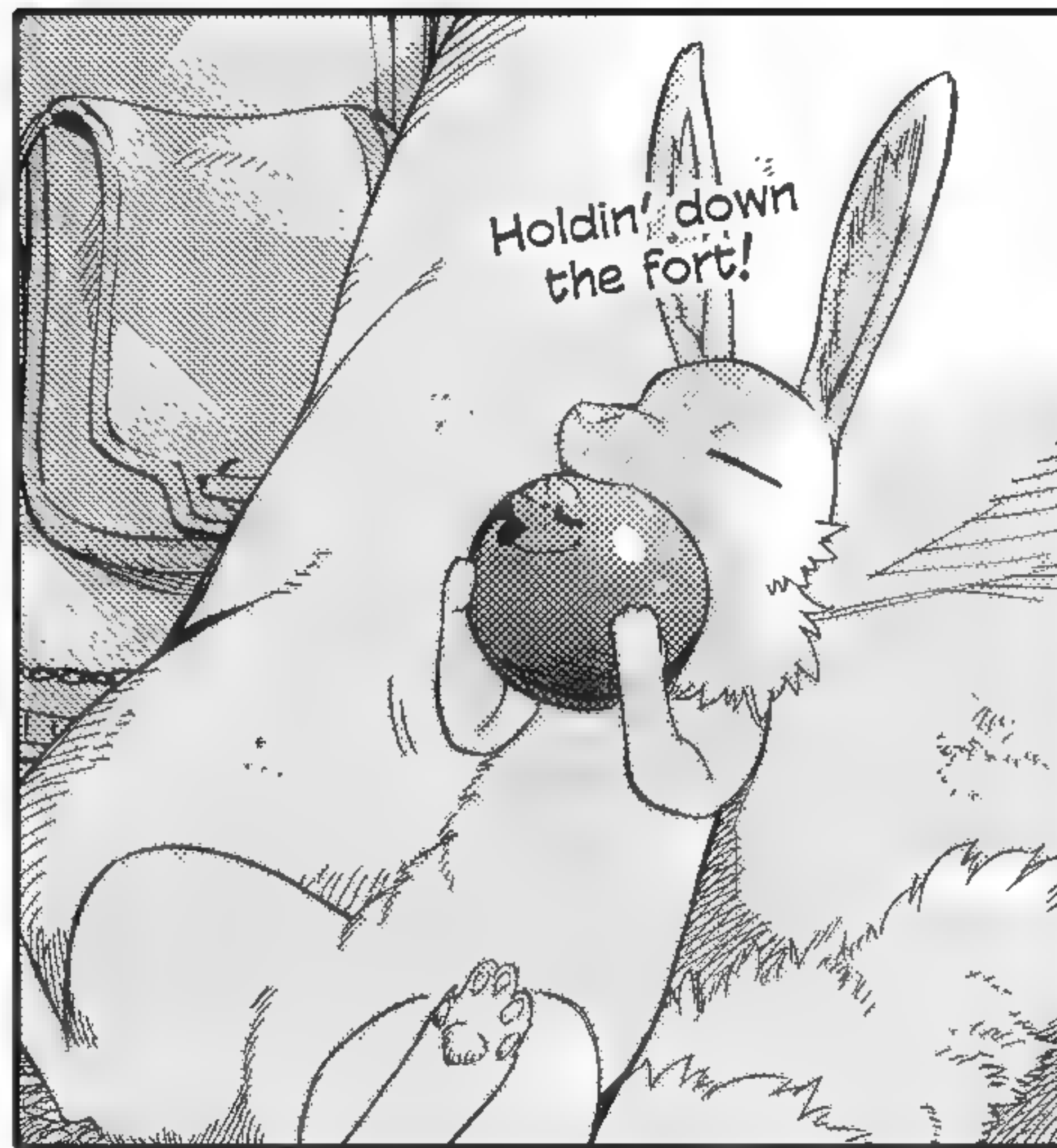






THAT  
CAN  
WAIT.

I'VE GOT  
BIGGER  
WORRIES.  
SOON I'LL BE  
INTRODUCING  
MYSELF TO  
THE OTHER  
TRAINEES.



Holdin' down  
the fort!



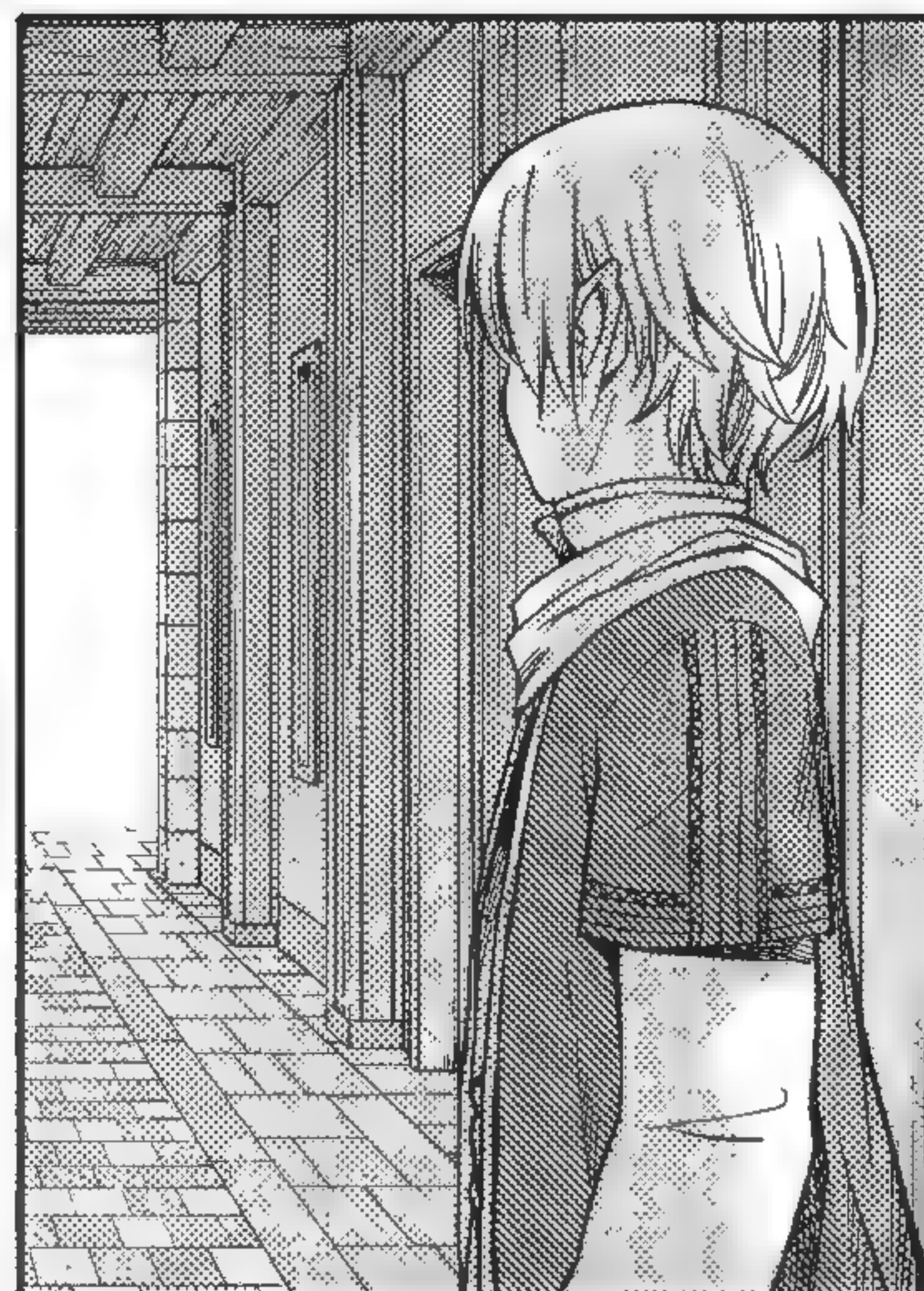
HOW  
DO  
YOU  
DO?

HOW  
DO  
YOU  
DO?

WELL-HEELED  
CITY GIRLS ARE  
PROBABLY QUIET  
AND POLITE.  
ESPECIALLY ONES  
THAT DREAM OF  
BEING KAFNA.

PLEASED  
TO MEET  
YA!!

IS  
EVERYONE  
GONNA  
STICK TO  
THEIR OWN  
CUSTOMS?



NO!  
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
WRONG WITH  
A CONFIDENT,  
ENTHUSIASTIC  
GREETING!



SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE



IS IT ME,  
OR DOES  
SOMETHING  
SMELL LIKE  
A FARM?

OH, MY.  
HE SURE  
IS LOUD.

How  
barbaric.



I JUST GOTTA  
WALK TALL AND  
GIVE IT MY ALL,  
NO MATTER  
WHAT!



Grk...













PLEASED  
TO  
MEET...



...!



TMP  
" "

IT'S...!

...Y-

TMP  
" "

TMP  
" "



AAAHH!

KAFWOMP  
" "

THFOOOO!!!

BOUND





DIANASYS DI'OHGGA





NATICA QUAPAN



REALLY?

COURSE, NATICA'S NOT THE ONLY ONE. EVERYONE HERE IS TRYING TO FEEL THINGS OUT.



BY THE WAY...

I MEAN, I IMAGINE IT'S HARD NOT TO STARE...

SURE! AND FROM THEIR GAZES, I CAN TELL THEY'VE GOT THEIR EYES ON ME.



NAH, SHE HASN'T READ A SINGLE WORD OF THAT THING.

MISS SHIFTY EYES HAS BEEN SCOPING OUT THE ROOM THIS ENTIRE TIME.

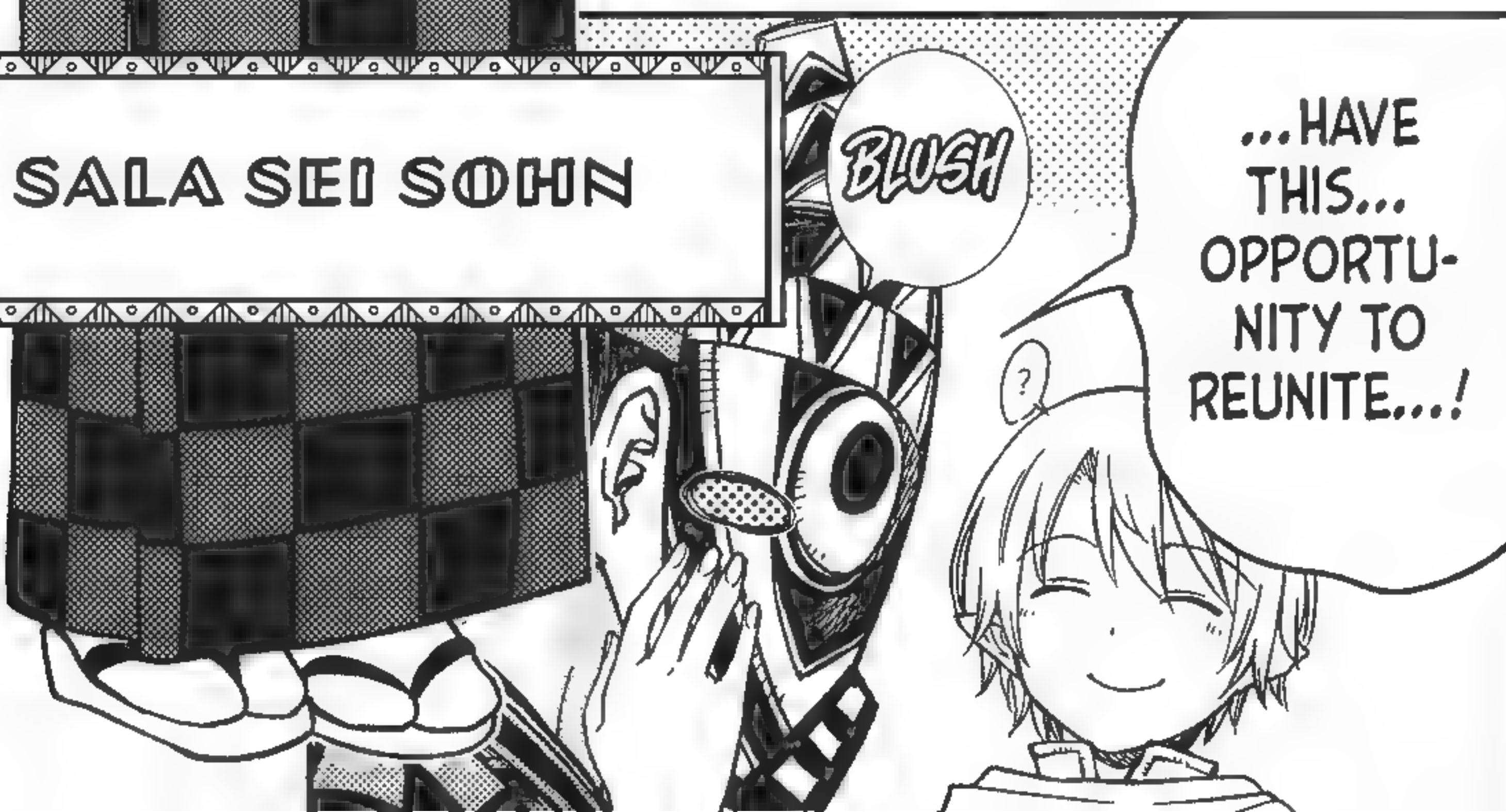
GRK! THAT BLASTED HUONE!

How'd she know?!

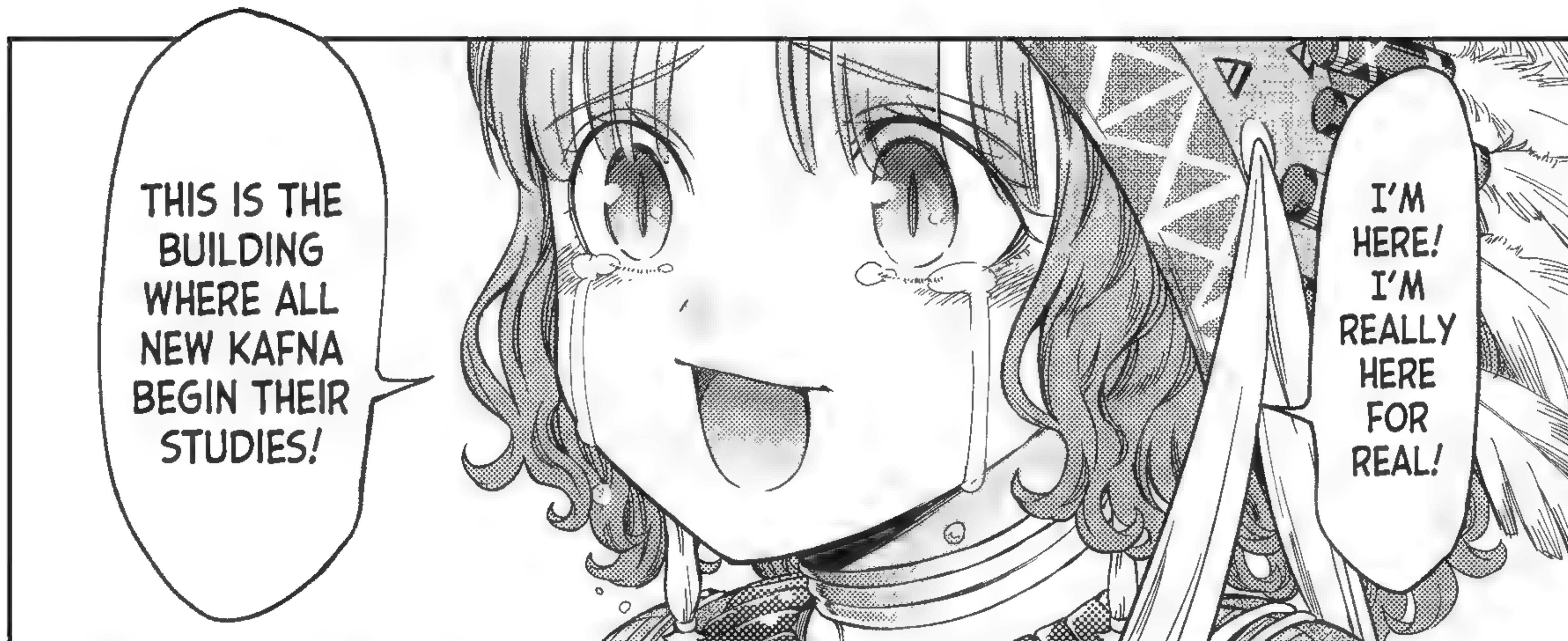




SALA SEI SOHN







THIS IS THE  
BUILDING  
WHERE ALL  
NEW KAFNA  
BEGIN THEIR  
STUDIES!

I'M  
HERE!  
I'M  
REALLY  
HERE  
FOR  
REAL!



I'M SO  
GLAD TO  
SEE YOU  
AGAIN!

HEY  
THERE,  
THEO!

I KNEW  
YOU'D  
PASS. YOU  
WERE A  
SHOO-IN!



UM, I'M  
PRETTY  
SURE YOU'RE  
GONNA BE  
TRAINING  
RIGHT THERE  
WITH US...

GEE GOLLY,  
JUST *THINKING*  
ABOUT HOW I GET  
TO WITNESS ALL  
YOU TRAINEES  
SPREADING YOUR  
WINGS AND TAKING  
TO THE SKIES  
AS KAFNA...

IT GETS MY  
HEART A-  
THUMPIN'!



It gets  
this sprite  
feelin' real  
sprightly!

WHOA!

HUH?!  
HEY!

PEPERICO?!

PEPERICO PRADHATTI



LOOKS LIKE  
THE OTHERS HAVE  
ALREADY BEGUN  
TO ASSEMBLE.  
I SUPPOSE WE  
OUGHT TO HEAD  
DOWN, TOO.

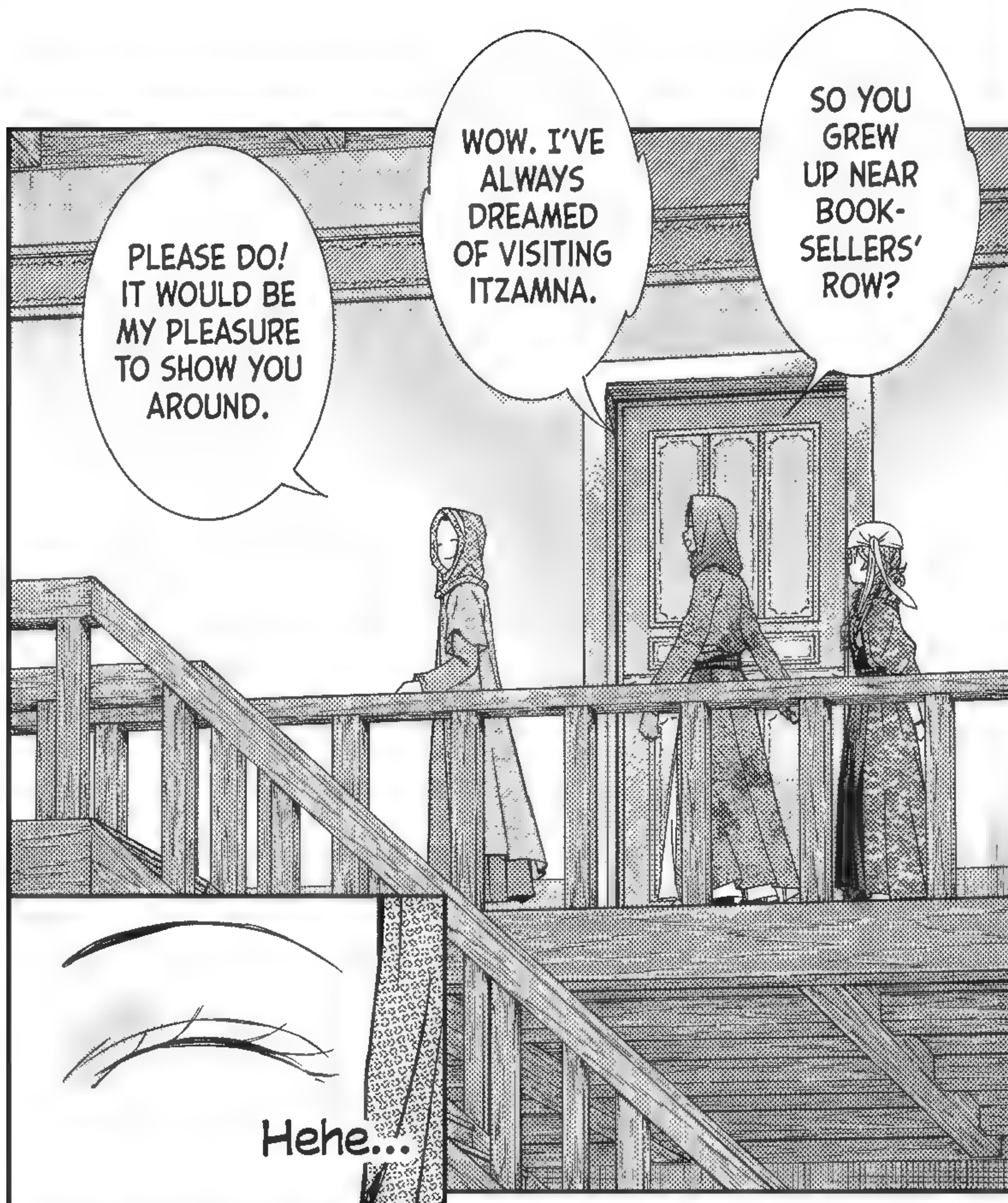


SHE'S, UH...  
REALLY INTO  
KAFNA, YOU  
SEE?

I'LL BE  
BACK TO  
GET THE  
DEETS  
FROM YOU  
AND YOUR  
FRIENDS  
LATER,  
THEO!

I GOTTA  
GET CRACKIN'!  
I'LL START  
WITH THE KIDS  
STANDIN' ON  
THEIR OWN.





PLEASE DO!  
IT WOULD BE  
MY PLEASURE  
TO SHOW YOU  
AROUND.

WOW. I'VE  
ALWAYS  
DREAMED  
OF VISITING  
ITZAMNA.

SO YOU  
GREW  
UP NEAR  
BOOK-  
SELLERS'  
ROW?

KA-  
CHAK



Hehe...



MIHONA QUAHAU



FWOING

HOW'S  
IT  
GOING,  
MIHO-

OH,  
HEY!

NGRK!!



THINGS  
ARE GOING  
GREAT.

LOOKIN'  
SUAVE,  
MIHONA.

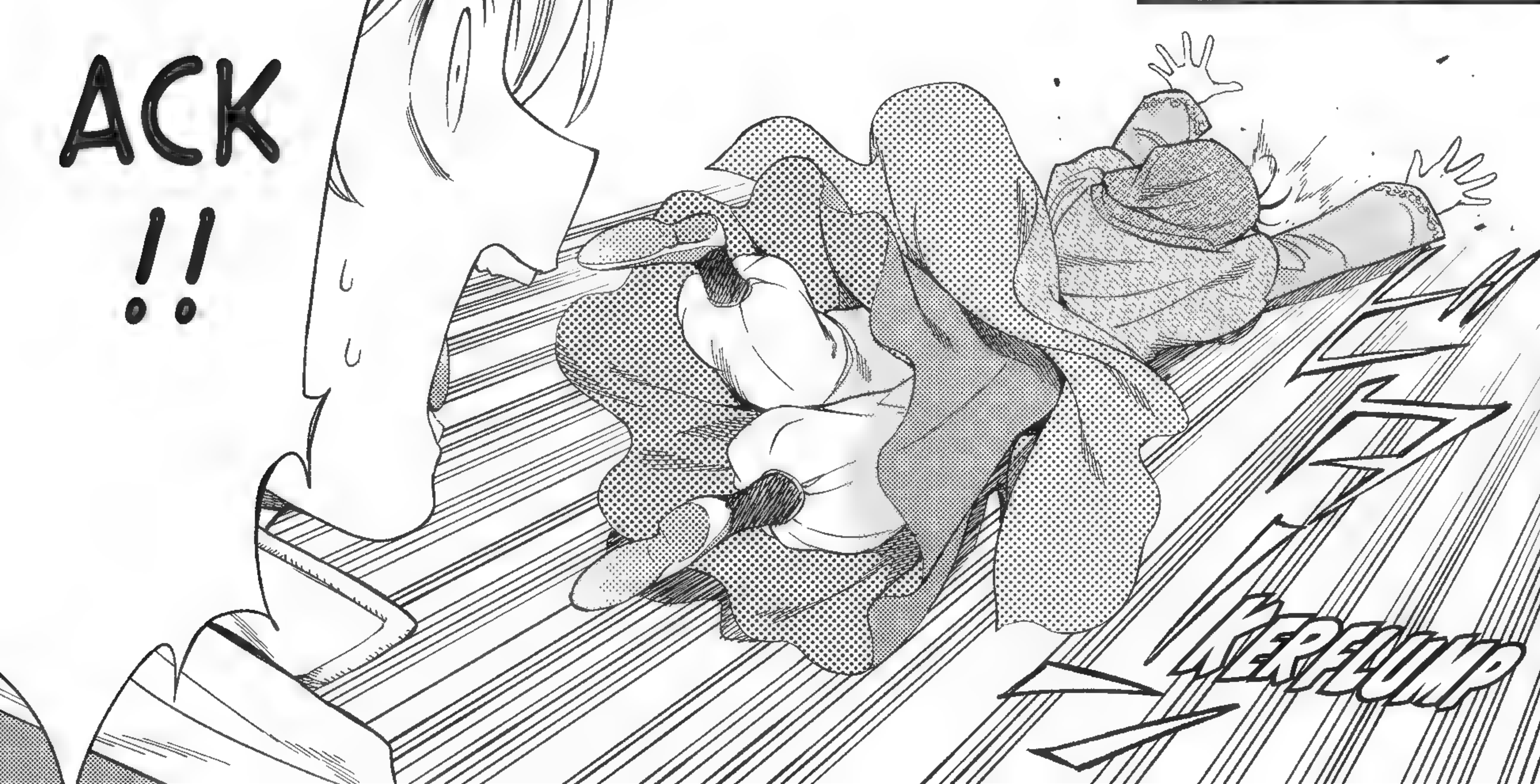
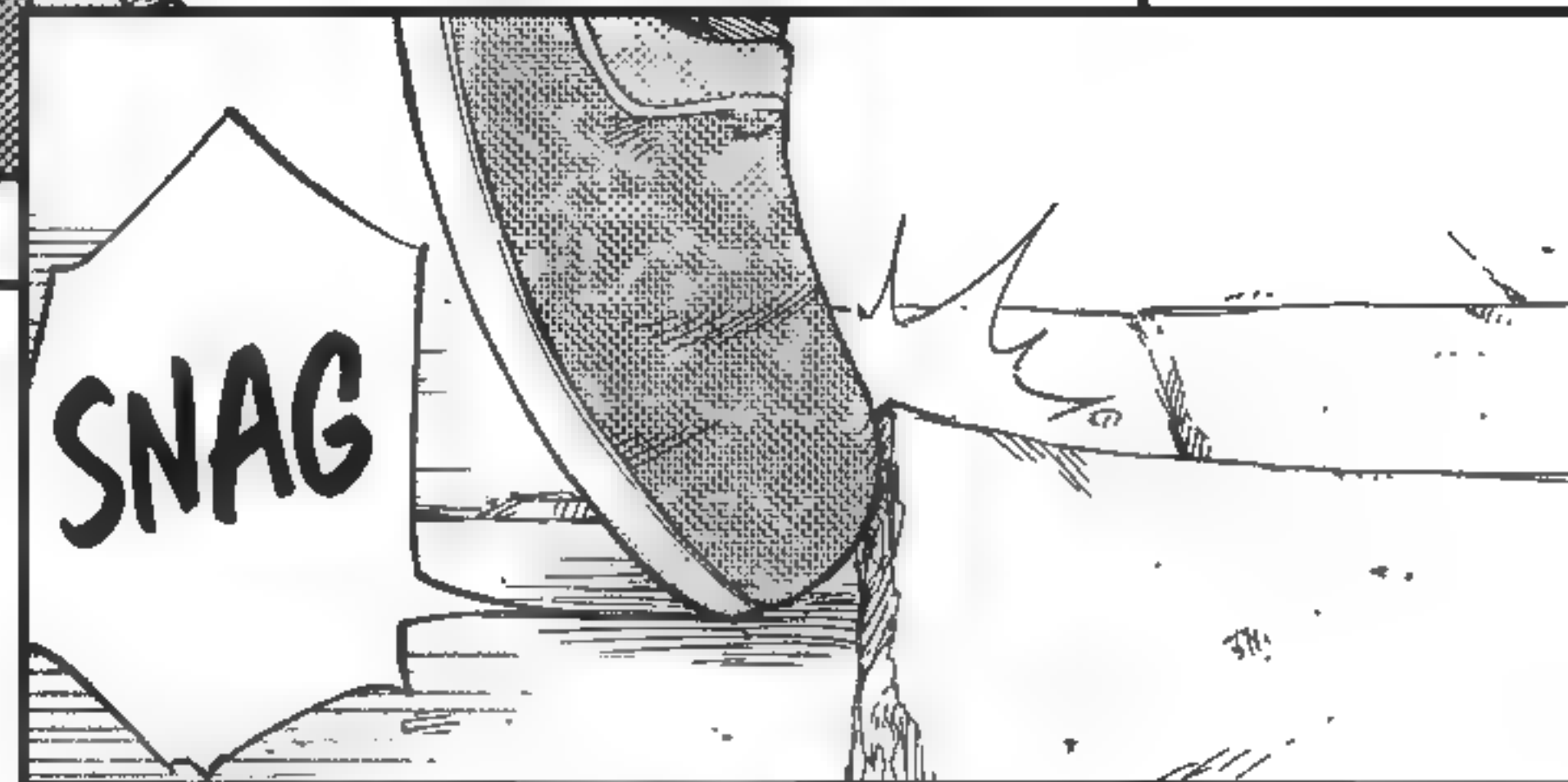
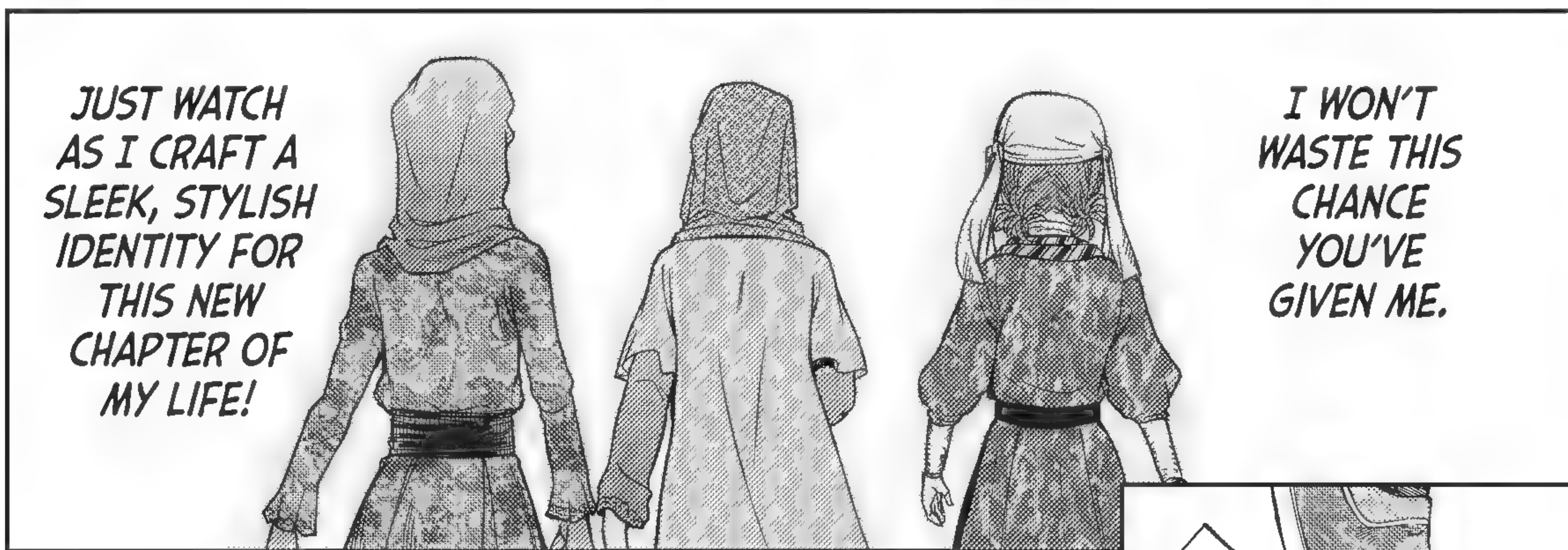
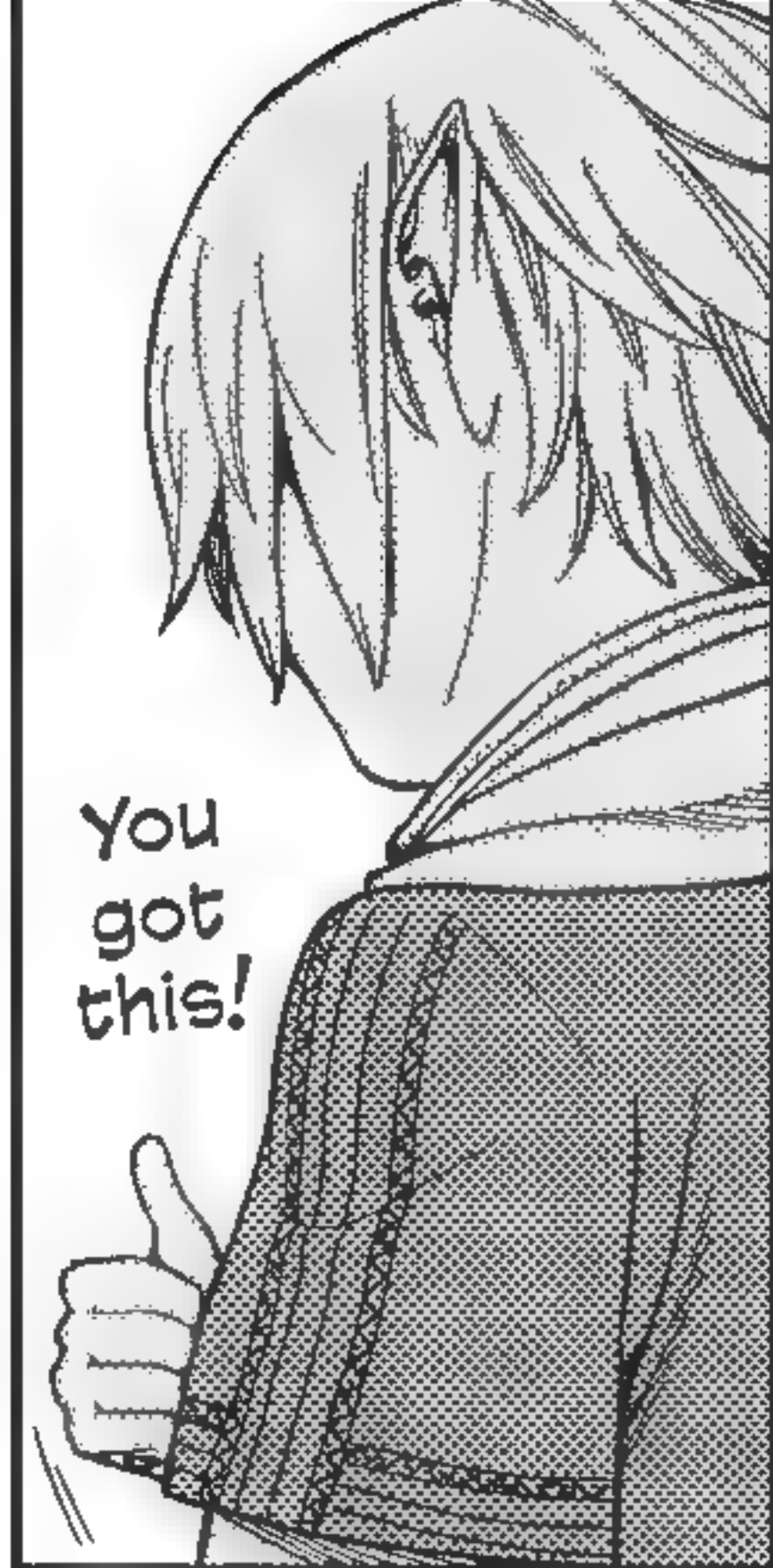
YOU'RE  
ON TRACK  
FOR AN  
IMPECCABLE  
FIRST  
IMPRESSION.



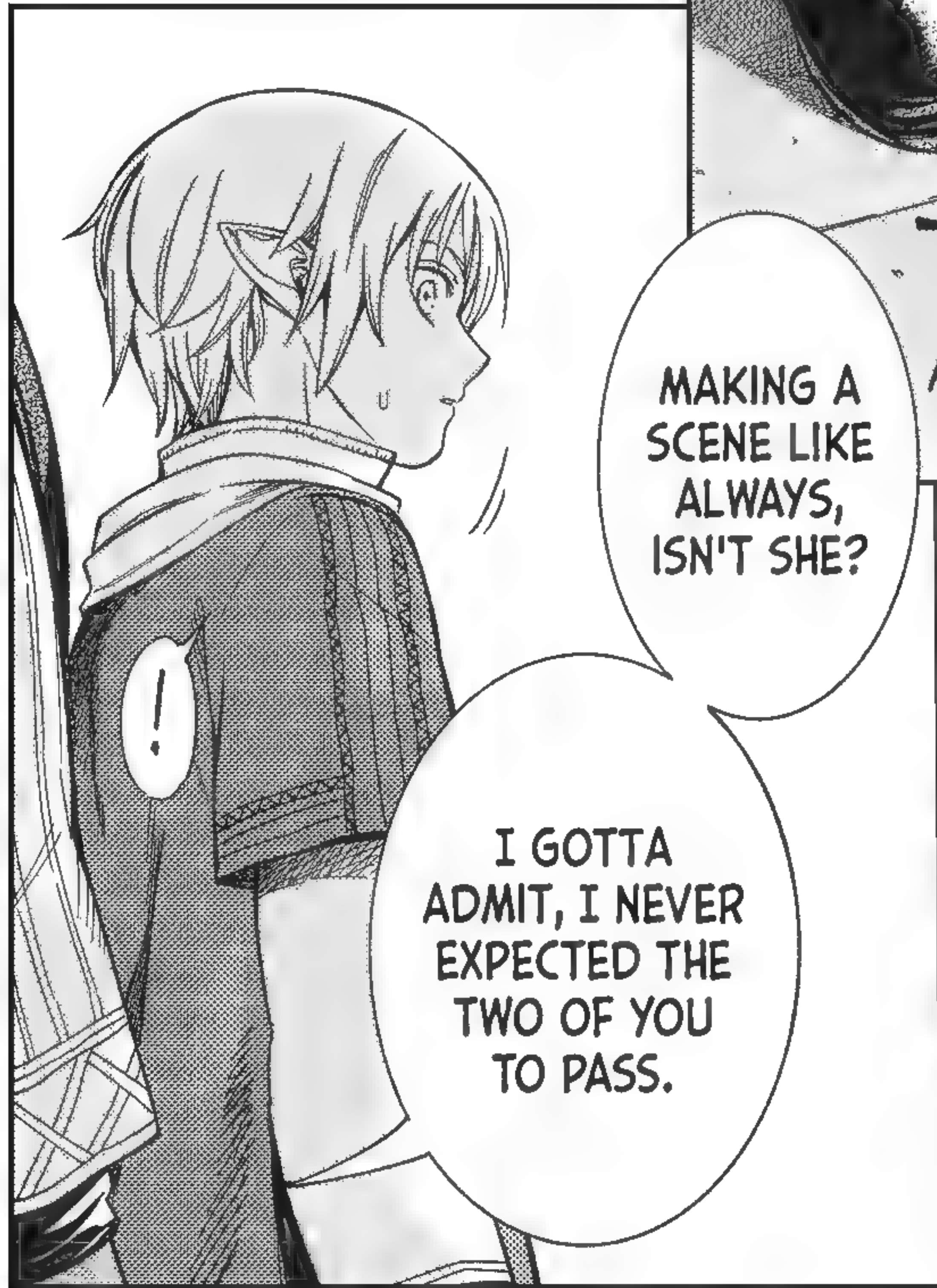
I'M  
STARTING  
OUT ON  
THE RIGHT  
FOOT FOR  
A DAZZLING  
KAFNA  
DEBUT!!

NOBODY HERE  
KNOWS THE  
FIRST THING  
ABOUT MY  
PAST!















OH  
HH  
BOYYY!

IT'S JUST...  
THREE BOYS  
IN THE SAME  
CLASS! I'M  
SO HAPPY!

SORRY...  
FORGIVE  
ME...

SUMOMO KAVISHMAF



DO YOU  
KNOW  
WHAT  
THIS  
IS?!

IT'S  
**FATE!**  
FATE,  
I TELL  
YOU!

I WAS SO  
SCARED  
THAT I'D  
BE ALONE  
HERE!



AND  
I WAS  
THE  
ONLY  
BOY  
TO  
PASS!

YOU  
WOULDN'T  
BELIEVE  
HOW OUT-  
NUMBERED  
WE WERE  
AT PREP  
SCHOOL!

THEY  
NEVER  
LEFT US  
BOYS  
ALONE!!



HEH,  
HEH, HEH...  
LOOK AT  
THEM ALL.  
A REAL  
BATCH OF  
WEIRDOS.

...




UGH. I  
GOTTA  
SPEND THE  
NEXT **YEAR**  
WITH THAT  
GUY?

IT'S AN  
**HONOR**  
TO MEET  
YOU,  
THEO!


ERM...  
YEAH!  
YOU,  
TOO!





HEY, IT'S NOT  
AN INSULT. I'M  
JUST SAYING LIFE  
AROUND HERE  
IS GONNA BE  
INTERESTING.


I WOULD  
VENTURE THAT  
YOU ARE THE  
LAST PERSON TO  
BE DESCRIBING  
OTHERS AS  
STRANGE.



I CAN  
ASSURE  
YOU, I  
WILL BE  
FINE.

YOU  
NEEDN'T  
CODDLE  
ME,  
KANA.

AYA GUUNJON



'COURSE, I  
AM A LITTLE  
WORRIED  
WHETHER  
YOU'LL  
MANAGE  
TO MAKE  
ANY NEW  
FRIENDS.

KANA MIDOREEN





\* ATLATONAN: THE GREAT SPIRIT SAID TO HAVE FORMED THE CONTINENT ITSELF







?!  
!!

EXCUSE  
ME?!



HAVE  
YOUR  
EARS  
FAILED  
YOU?

I *TOLD* YOU  
TO LEAVE ME  
BE. PEASANTS  
SHOULD KNOW  
BETTER THAN TO  
PESTER THOSE  
OF PROPER  
BIRTH.



YOU  
WANNA  
SAY THAT  
AGAIN?!



WHAT  
KINDA  
STUFF'  
ARE YA  
INTO?!

MADHA!  
ENOUGH!

WHERE  
YA  
FROM  
?!  
?

DON'T  
TALK  
TO YOU,  
HUH?!  
WELL,  
EAT  
THIS!

WHAT'S  
YER  
NAME?!



C'MON,  
MADHA.  
DON'T  
MAKE A  
SCENE...

I WAS *TRYIN'*  
TO GIVE  
THIS GIRL A  
COMPLIMENT!  
ALL I SAID  
WAS THAT  
HER BIRD  
IS PRETTY  
SWEET.





PERHAPS  
YOUR FAILURE  
TO LISTEN  
REFLECTS A  
FAILURE TO  
UNDERSTAND.  
ALLOW ME  
TO INSTRUCT  
YOU.





**Theo Fumis**

A boy of Hyron and Haupi heritage. Though raised in the slums, he balanced a life of study and work and managed to pass the kafna exam. His greatest strengths are his stamina and physical constitution, honed over years of labor at Ganán Masonry.

**Sumomo Kavishmaf**

A Hydiah boy hailing from a large and respected house known for producing many kafna. His guileless demeanor is marred only by the occasional consequent lapse in etiquette. Skittish around girls and women thanks to the many overbearing personalities surrounding him as he grew up.

**Alv Tlaloque**

A boy of rather small stature. Pretends not to care about his height, yet dreams of a long-awaited growth spurt. Had the second-highest exam score of this incoming class. Actually quite gifted at navigating social situations when he chooses, and thus completed the exam's practical component with ease.





### Kana Midoreen

A Rakta girl and longtime friend of Aya's. At 172 cm, she stands tallest among this class of trainees. Requires little sleep and is thus exceptionally well-read among her peers. Boasts encyclopedic knowledge of arthropods that would make any hamna green with envy.

### Aya Guunjoh

A Rakta girl and the star examinee of this year's incoming class. Naturally gifted in nearly every endeavor, she is eminently suited to the duties of any of the Library's twelve offices. However, there is one facet of life she finds terribly nettlesome.

### Yuki Chairow

A Rakta girl who tends to go unnoticed by others. Quiet and impassive, she in fact has a secret love of prompting others to laughter. Is constantly thinking up low-key pranks to catch her peers off guard.



RMMBBL

OH, YOU'RE  
GONNA  
SPELL IT  
OUT FOR ME,  
ARE YOU?!

THAT'S *TWICE*  
NOW YOU'VE  
CALLED ME A  
"PEASANT."

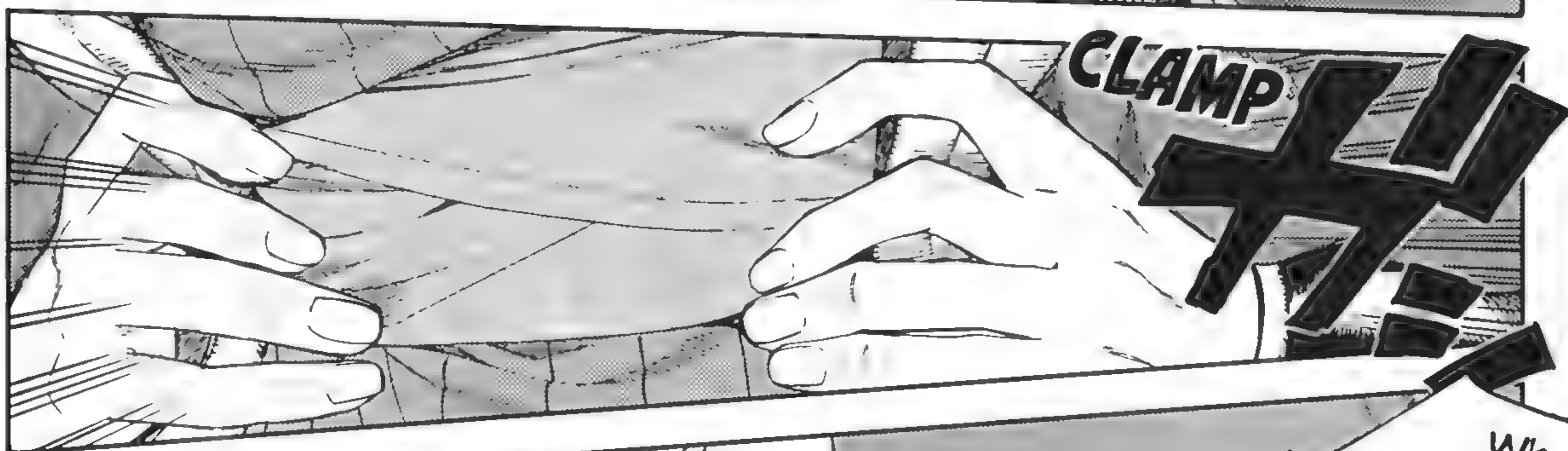
SO TELL  
ME, YOUR  
HIGH-  
NESS...

...WHAT  
ROYAL  
LINE DO  
YOU HAIL  
FROM?!

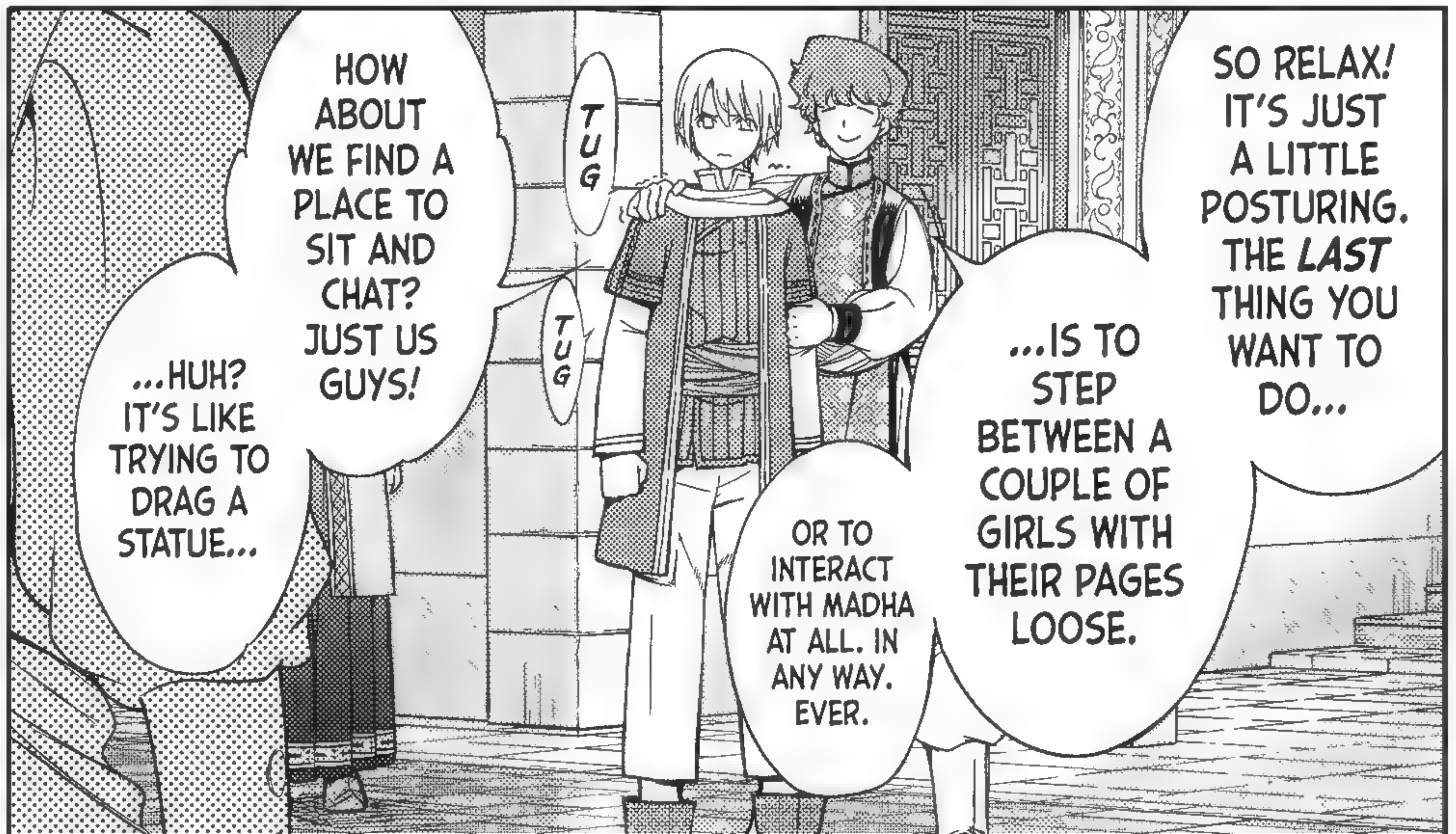
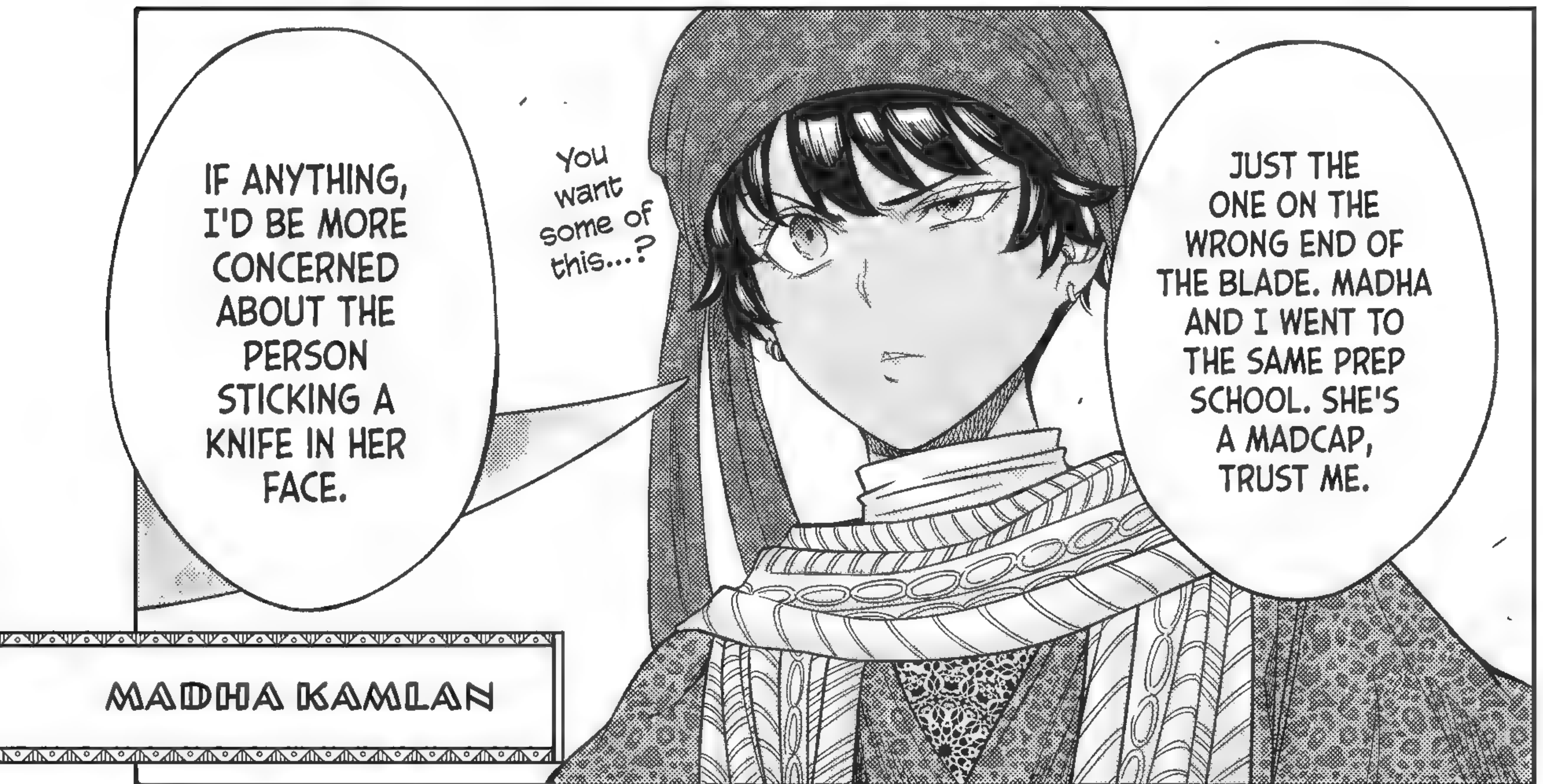
YOU  
ASKED  
HER TO  
REPEAT  
HERSELF!

TMP











FLICK

DRIP...

?!?

EEEEK!


?!?







TELL ME.  
WHAT DO  
YOU SEE?



FOR THIS  
BLOOD FLOWS  
ONLY THROUGH  
THE VEINS OF  
THOSE NOBLE  
ENOUGH TO  
HAIL FROM  
HOUSE  
HAHAL'K.

BUT ALL  
SIMILARITY  
ENDS THERE.  
WHAT YOU SEE  
HERE, YOU  
MAY NEVER  
POSSESS.

BLOOD LIKE  
ANY OTHER? I  
IMAGINE SOME  
OF YOU MIGHT  
ANSWER AS  
SUCH.

THE  
COLOR,  
PERHAPS,  
IS THE  
SAME.



SHOULD YOU  
KNOW OF  
MY HOUSE,  
THEN THROW  
YOURSELF  
BEFORE ME  
NOW.

SHOULD YOU  
KNOW *NOT*,  
THEN YOU MAY  
FIRST PLEAD  
FORGIVENESS  
FOR YOUR  
IGNORANCE, AND  
*THEN* THROW  
YOURSELF  
BEFORE ME.

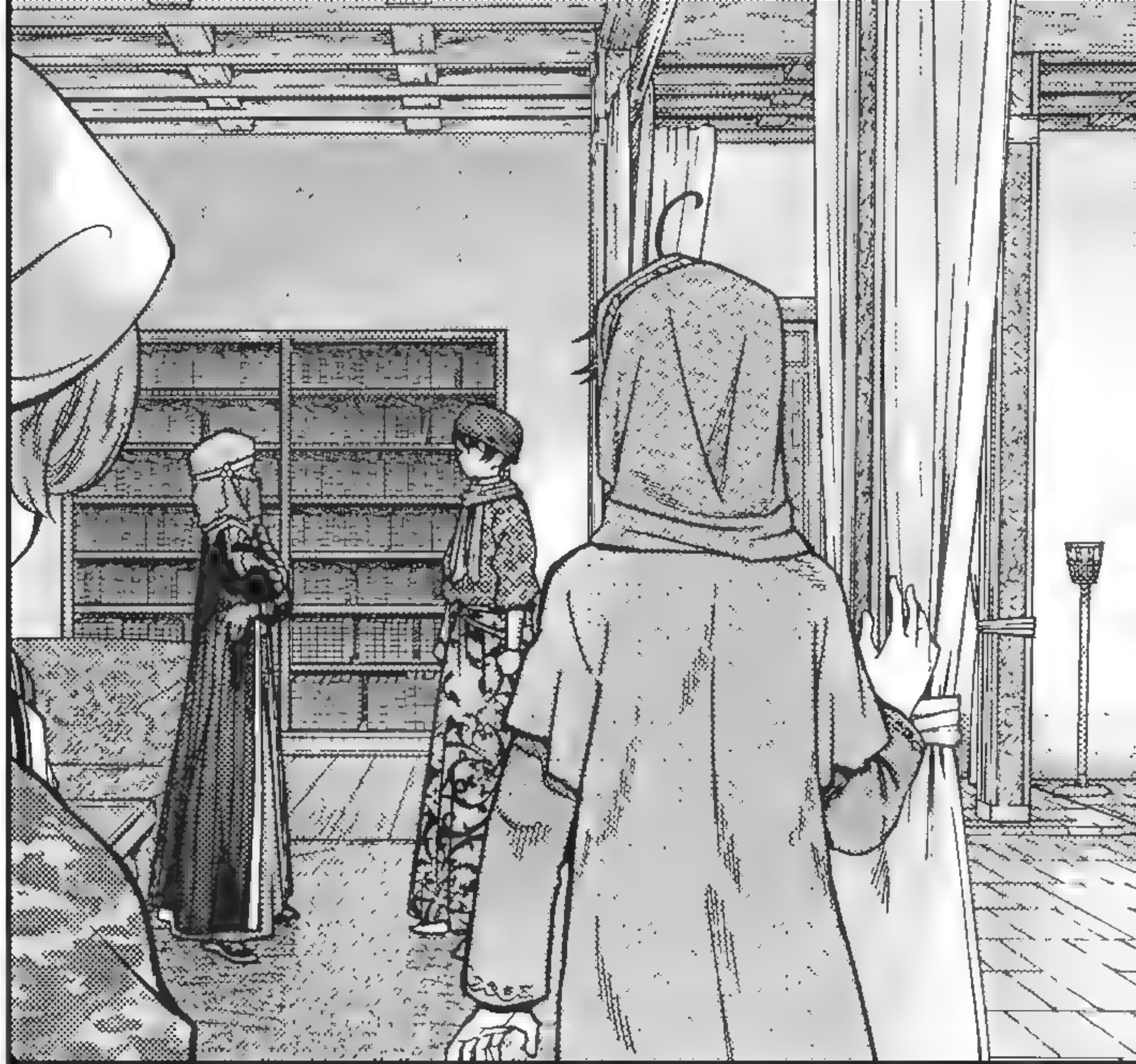
BEFORE  
YOU STANDS  
MEDINA HAHAL'K.  
TAKE CARE TO  
REMEMBER  
THAT.

MEDINA HAHAL'K





YOU HAVE  
GOT TO BE  
KIDDING  
ME.



SHE'S TOTALLY  
RUINING MY  
ILLUSTRIOUS  
DEBUT!

AND SHE KEEPS  
A FALCON ON  
HER SHOULDER?  
THAT'S SO  
UNFAIR!!

DID SHE  
JUST CUT  
HER OWN  
HAND TO  
SHOW HER  
BLOOD?



H-HOW...  
WHY IS  
SHE...?

Hmmm...

SOMEONE IN THE  
ROOM DRAWS A  
KNIFE, AND SHE  
JUST STANDS  
THERE PICKING  
LINT FROM HER  
CLOTHES?

SAE FUMIS



WE HAVE  
TO SHARE AN  
INCOMING CLASS  
WITH TWO  
RUFFIANS...

WHIRL  
IL

W-WOW...  
CAN YOU  
BELIEVE  
IT, SAE?

IS  
THAT...  
LINT?!!

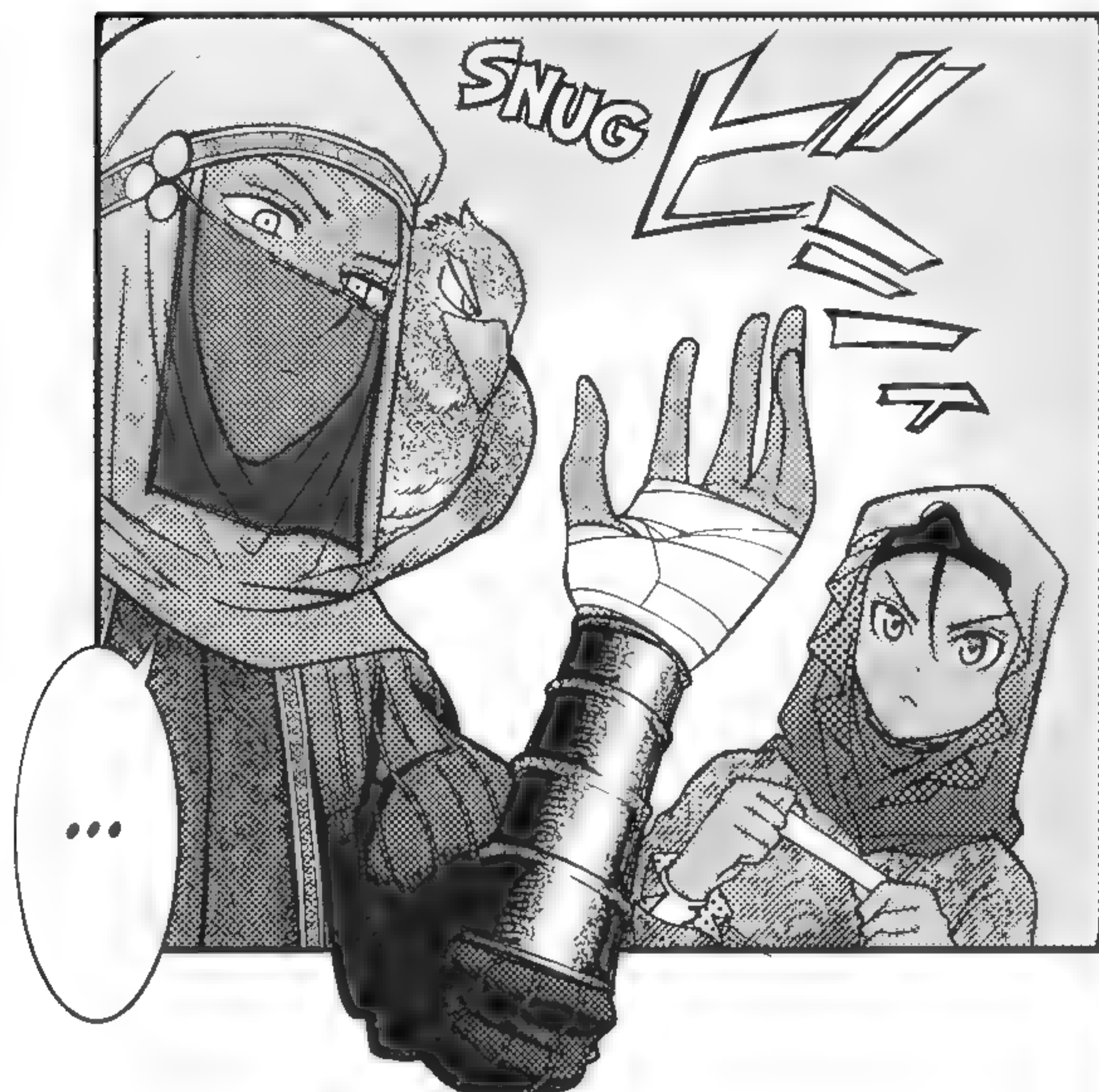
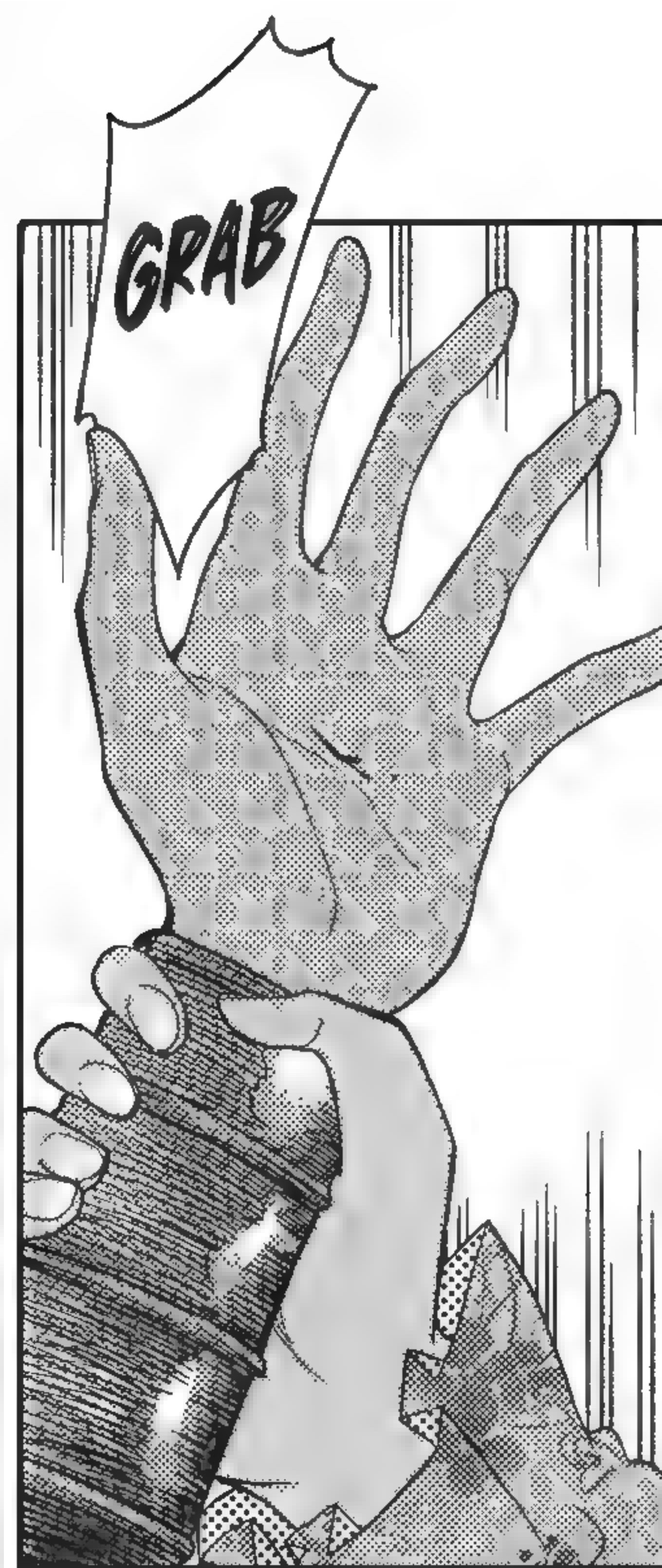
PLUCK...  
7°  
7°

PLUCK...  
7°  
7°

PLUCK...  
7°  
7°

PLUCK...





TEPEL HURACAAN





...WONDERFUL. THIS ONE'S JUST AS ANNOYING AS MY MOTHER.

OH, FOR GOODNESS' SAKE!



UH... DO YOU ALWAYS CARRY BANDAGES WITH YOU?

AND THE CARPET! WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, LETTING YOUR BLOOD DRIP LIKE THAT?!

IT'S GOING TO LEAVE A STAIN!



PToo! PToo!

THAT'S ENOUGH, MADHA!

YAKO MUSUF



WAS IT TOO MUCH TO EXPECT A MODICUM OF REFINEMENT AMONG THE OTHER TRAINEES?

WHAT A LET-DOWN.

CAUCHA HOZANYK



AH, TO BE YOUNG AGAIN...

HEHE...

??????



MURMUR

MURMUR

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...



MAKE IT STOP, MAKE IT STOP, MAKE IT STOP.

TSITZY MIMEN

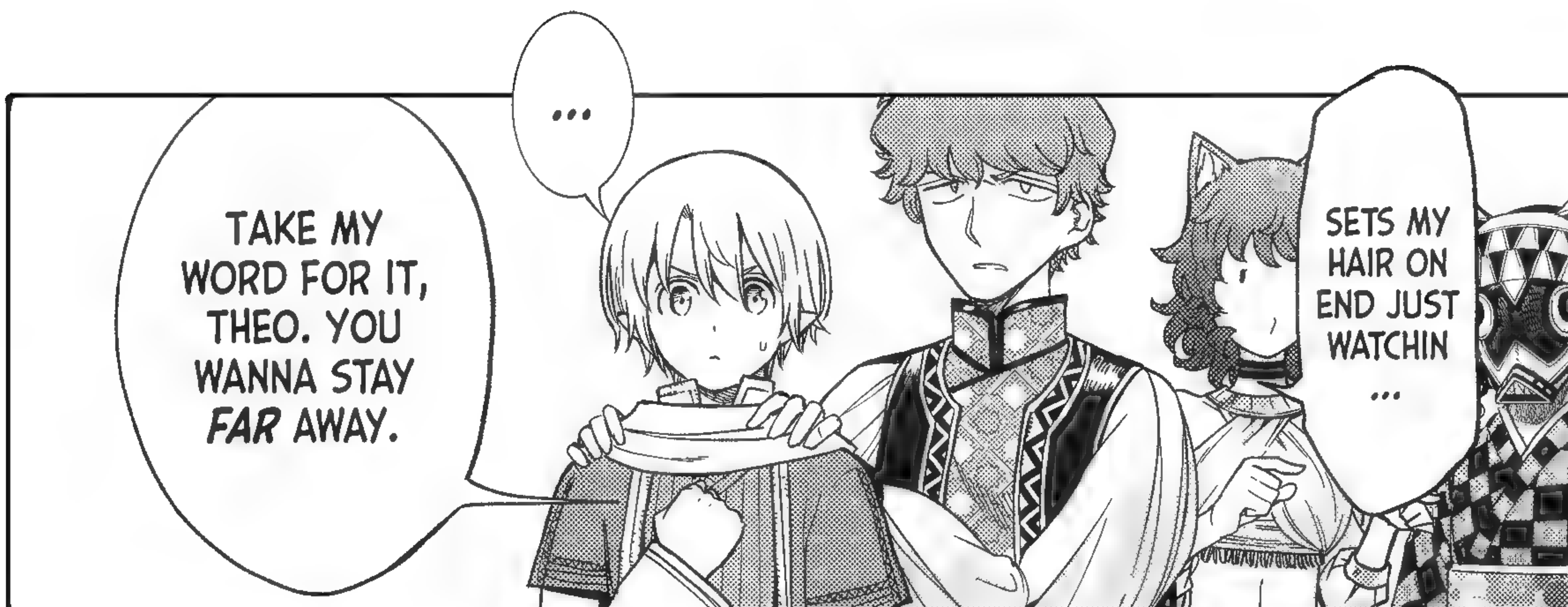


Ball of lint, ball of lint, tra la la...

DO I HAVE ANY HOPE OF STANDING OUT IN A CROWD LIKE THIS?

DO...





TAKE MY  
WORD FOR IT,  
THEO. YOU  
WANNA STAY  
FAR AWAY.

...

SETS MY  
HAIR ON  
END JUST  
WATCHIN  
...



LOOK  
AT  
THEM.

HUH?!  
YOU'RE  
BACK!



ARE YOU  
SURE THIS  
IS NORMAL  
BEHAVIOR?

YOUNG KAFNA  
GRAPPLING WITH  
THE TRIALS OF  
THEIR SPRING-  
TIME YEARS.



OH, IT  
MAKES MY  
HEART GO  
PITTER-  
PAT!

PLISH



IT SEEMS  
THAT *ONE*  
OF THIS  
YEAR'S  
TRAINEES...

...IS BEING  
EVALUATED AS  
A POTENTIAL  
SUCCESSOR TO  
THE MAGUS OF  
THE LIBRARY!



I JUST  
GOT WIND OF  
SOMETHING  
BIG. A REAL  
SCOOP!

NEVER-  
MIND  
THAT!  
LISTEN,  
THEO!

YOU  
DID?





ALL  
RIGHT,  
SETTLE  
DOWN.  
ARE  
WE ALL  
HERE?

Ooh!  
Kafna!

SO DON'T  
TAKE IT TOO  
SERIOUS-  
LIKE!

IT'S JUST  
A RUMOR.  
I HAVEN'T  
LOOKED  
INTO IT.

I HAVEN'T  
THE FOG-  
GIEST!  
Not a  
clue!

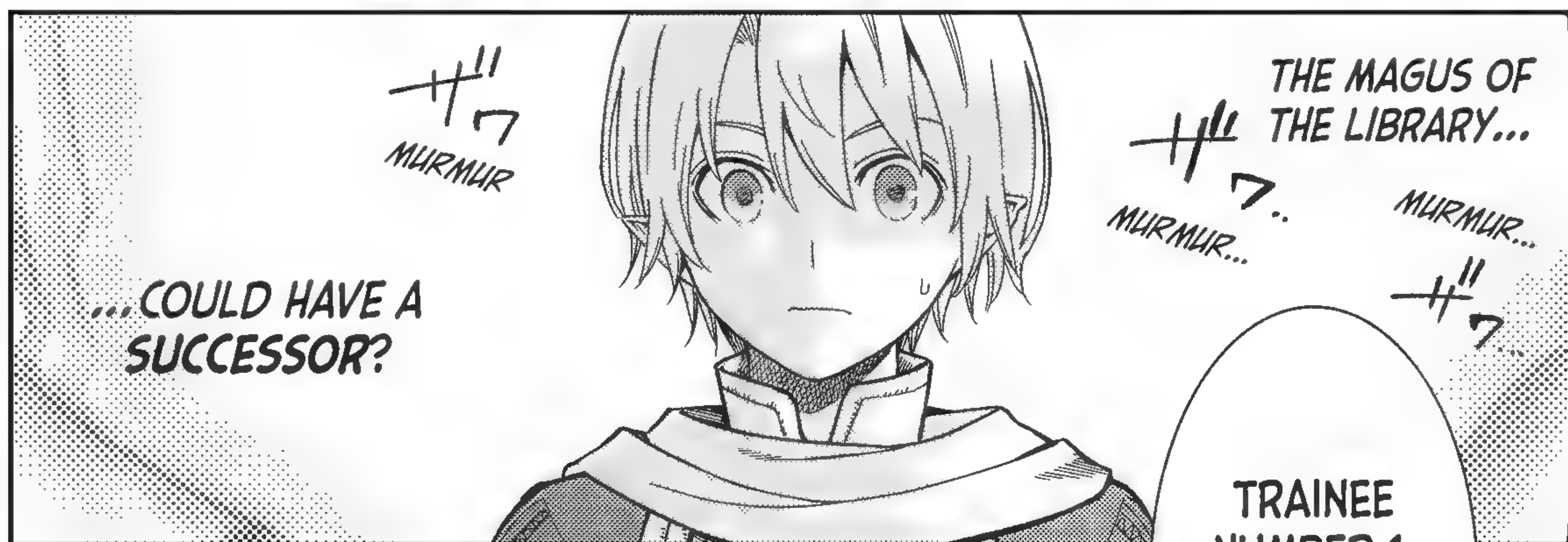
THE MAGI  
CAN PASS  
DOWN THEIR  
TITLES?

A...  
SUCCE-  
SOR?



IF YOU'VE YET  
TO CONFIRM  
YOUR DORMITORY  
ASSIGNMENT, LET  
US KNOW, AND  
WE'LL GET YOU  
YOUR KEY.

I'LL BE TAKING  
ATTENDANCE.  
PLEASE  
RESPOND WHEN  
YOUR NAME IS  
CALLED.



...COULD HAVE A  
SUCCESSOR?

MURMUR

THE MAGUS OF  
THE LIBRARY...  
MURMUR...

MURMUR...

MURMUR...

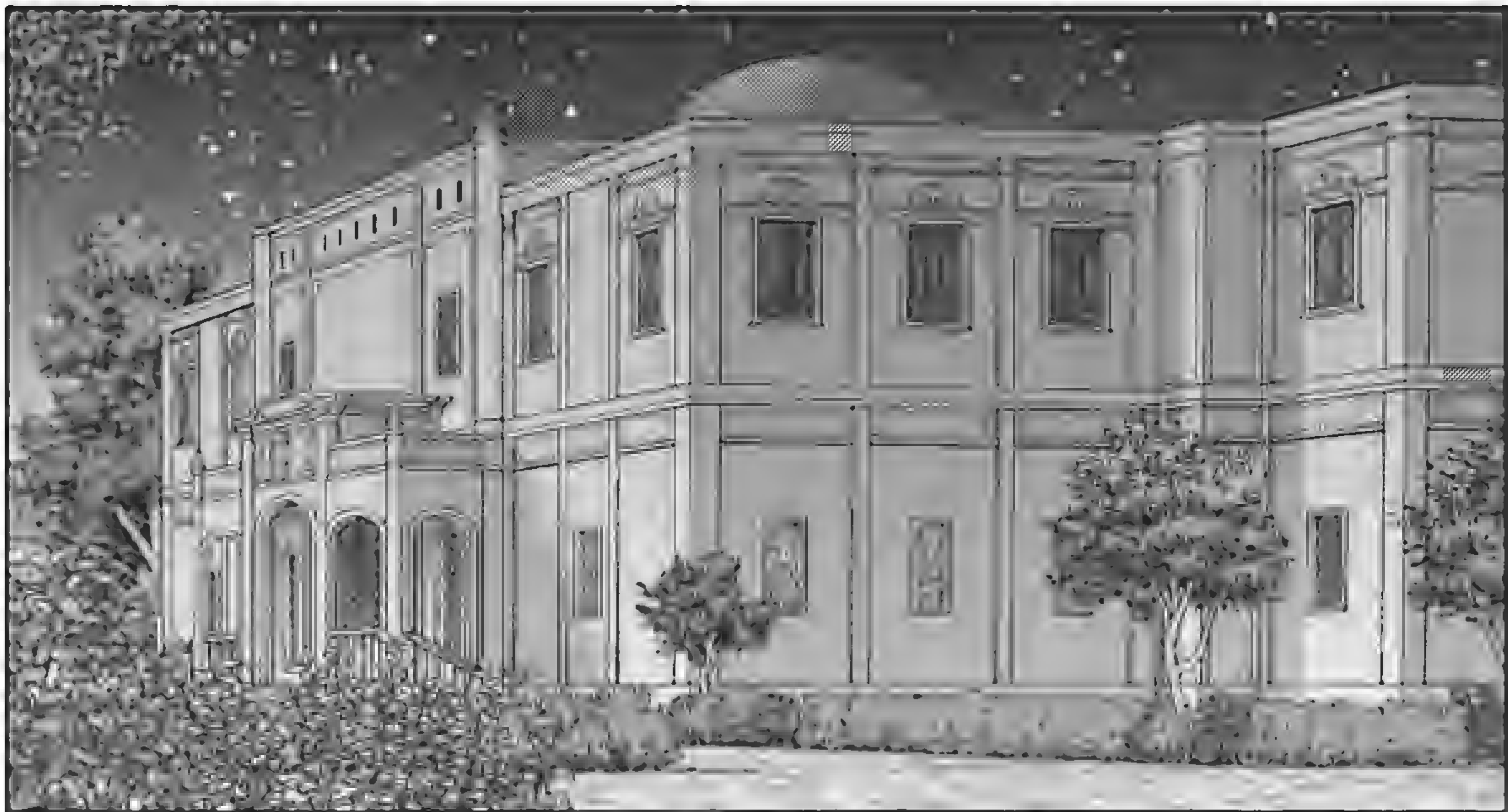
TRAINEE  
NUMBER 1,  
YAKO  
MUSUF!



TRAINEE  
NUMBER  
2...!

HERE!







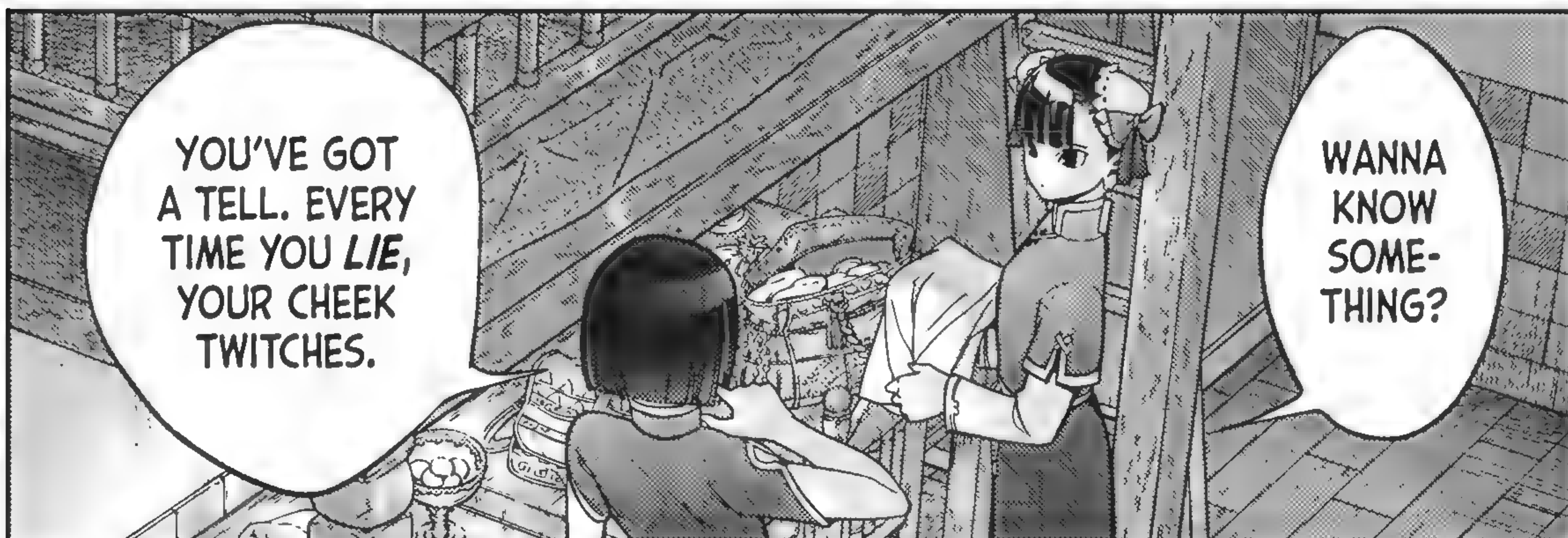


I'M CERTAIN I WOULD GET ALONG FINE WITH WHOMEVER.

NOT REALLY.



BETCHA BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU WERE ROOMING WITH ME.



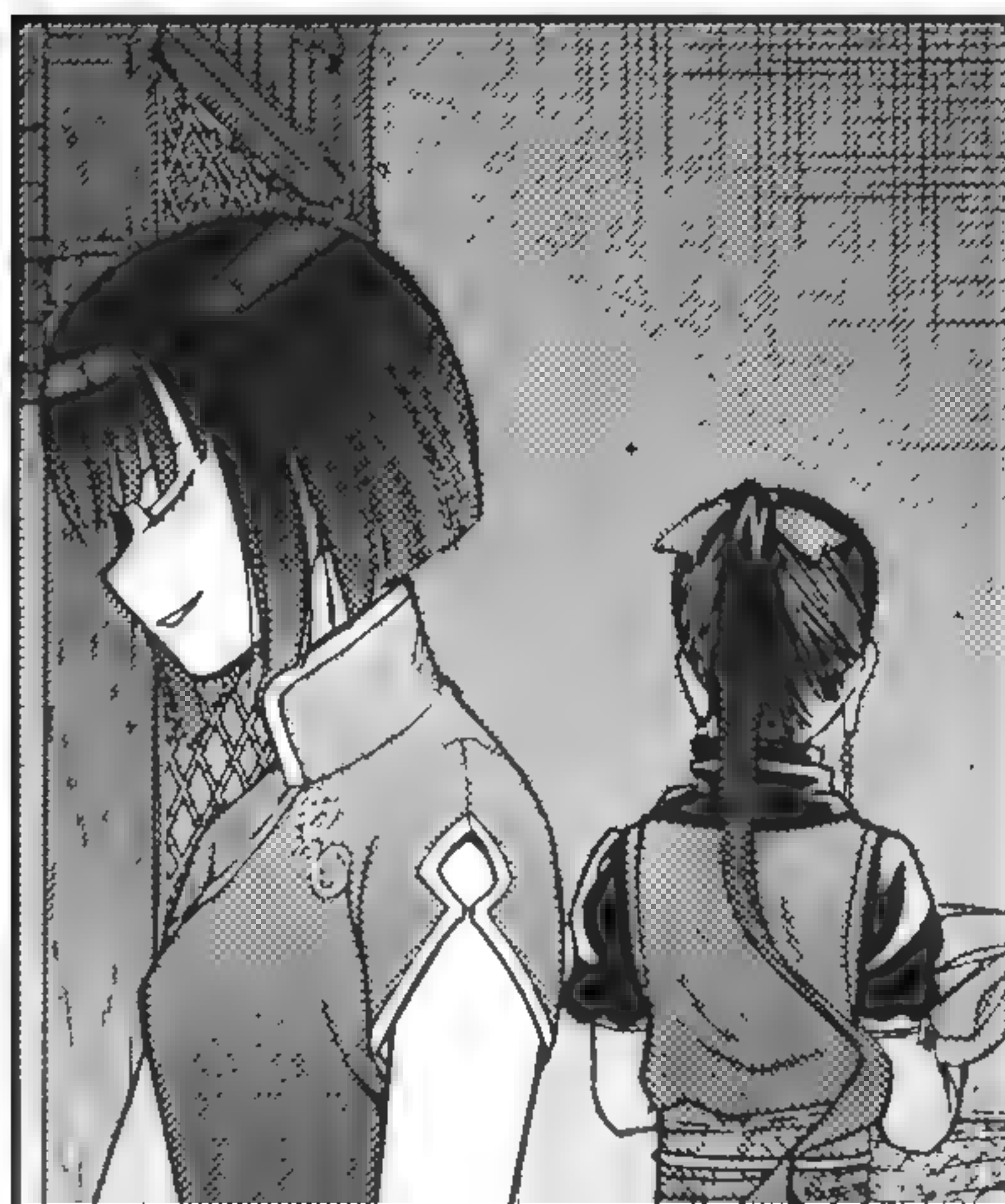
YOU'VE GOT A TELL. EVERY TIME YOU *LIE*, YOUR CHEEK TWITCHES.

WANNA KNOW SOMETHING?



KID-DING.

JUST



BWA-HAHA!







WHERE  
DID *YOU*  
COME  
FROM?!

WHAT  
THE?!



YUKI CHAIROW

...THE  
ENTIRE  
TIME.

I'VE  
BEEN  
HERE...



SEEMS  
PRUDENT  
TO ME.

HMPH.  
HOW ORIGINAL.  
ALL THE RAKTA  
TRAINEES  
CRAMMED INTO  
THE SAME DORM  
ROOM.

SHE'S SO  
QUIET, SHE  
MIGHT AS  
WELL BE A  
GHOST.



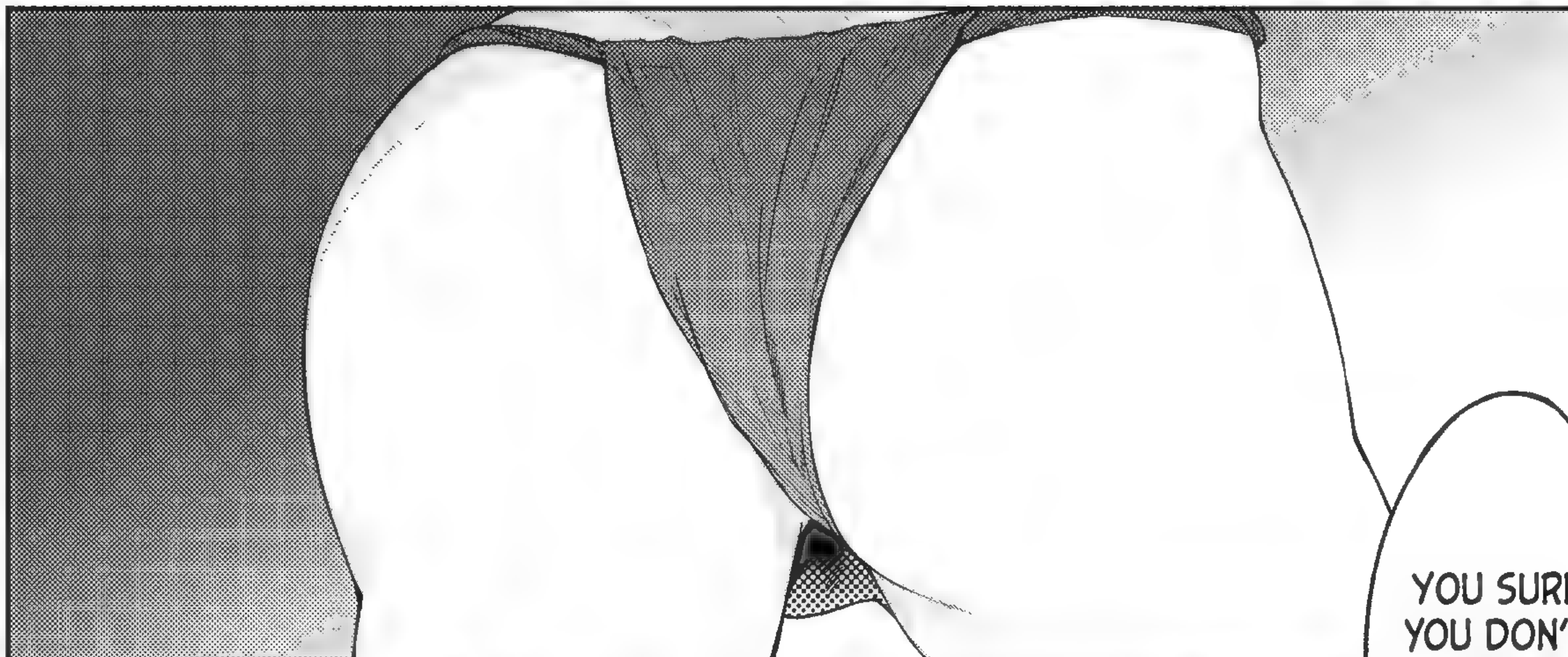
"...TO  
FLOCK  
WITH  
FAMILIAR  
FEATHER."

"BUT WHEN  
IT COMES TO  
A PLACE TO  
BED DOWN,  
THE WISE  
KNOW..."

...!

IN THE WORDS  
OF THE GREAT  
KEN KHLOE, "RACE  
IS NO BARRIER  
TO LAUGHTER,  
WORK, OR MEALS  
SHARED."





YOU SURE  
YOU DON'T  
MIND ME  
TAKING THE  
TOP BUNK,  
MADHA?



OH,  
WAIT...  
IS IT A  
LITTLE  
MUCH  
FOR  
HYRON  
SENSIBIL-  
ITIES?

THIS IS  
WHAT I  
ALWAYS  
WEAR.



NO!  
IT'S  
FINE!



Erm...



IT LOOKS  
A LITTLE,  
UH...  
**CHILLY.**

IT'S FINE.  
BUT, UM...  
IS THAT GONNA  
BE YOUR USUAL  
DORM ROOM  
ATTIRE?



AHAHA!  
DOES  
THIS EVEN  
COUNT AS  
CLOTHING  
?!

WANNA  
TRY MINE?  
I'VE GOT  
EXTRA!

ALRIGHT!  
THAT'S  
THE  
SPIRIT!

FROM NOW  
ON, IT'S  
THE CREYAK  
WAY OR THE  
HIGHWAY,  
BABY!

I'VE ALWAYS  
THOUGHT  
CLOTHES ARE A  
PAIN! I NEVER  
WEAR ALL  
THIS WHEN  
I'M ALONE.

IN FACT, I'M  
ON BOARD!  
LET'S DO  
THIS!



AFTER  
THAT,  
IT'S ALL  
SMOOTH  
SAILING!

FIRST  
IMPRESSIONS!

...FOR TURN-  
ING OFF THE  
LIGHTS AND  
TAKING OUT  
THE TRASH.

...AND  
DELEGATES  
RESPONSI-  
BILITY...

LAY DOWN  
THE LAW,  
MIHONA.

POWER BE  
TO SHE WHO  
CLAIMS THE  
TOP BUNK...

NGAHHH!

WHAT?

THIS  
IS IT!  
SHOW-  
TIME!

KA-  
CHAK

ENTER,  
DEAR  
ROOM-  
MATE!

IT IS I,  
MIHONA!

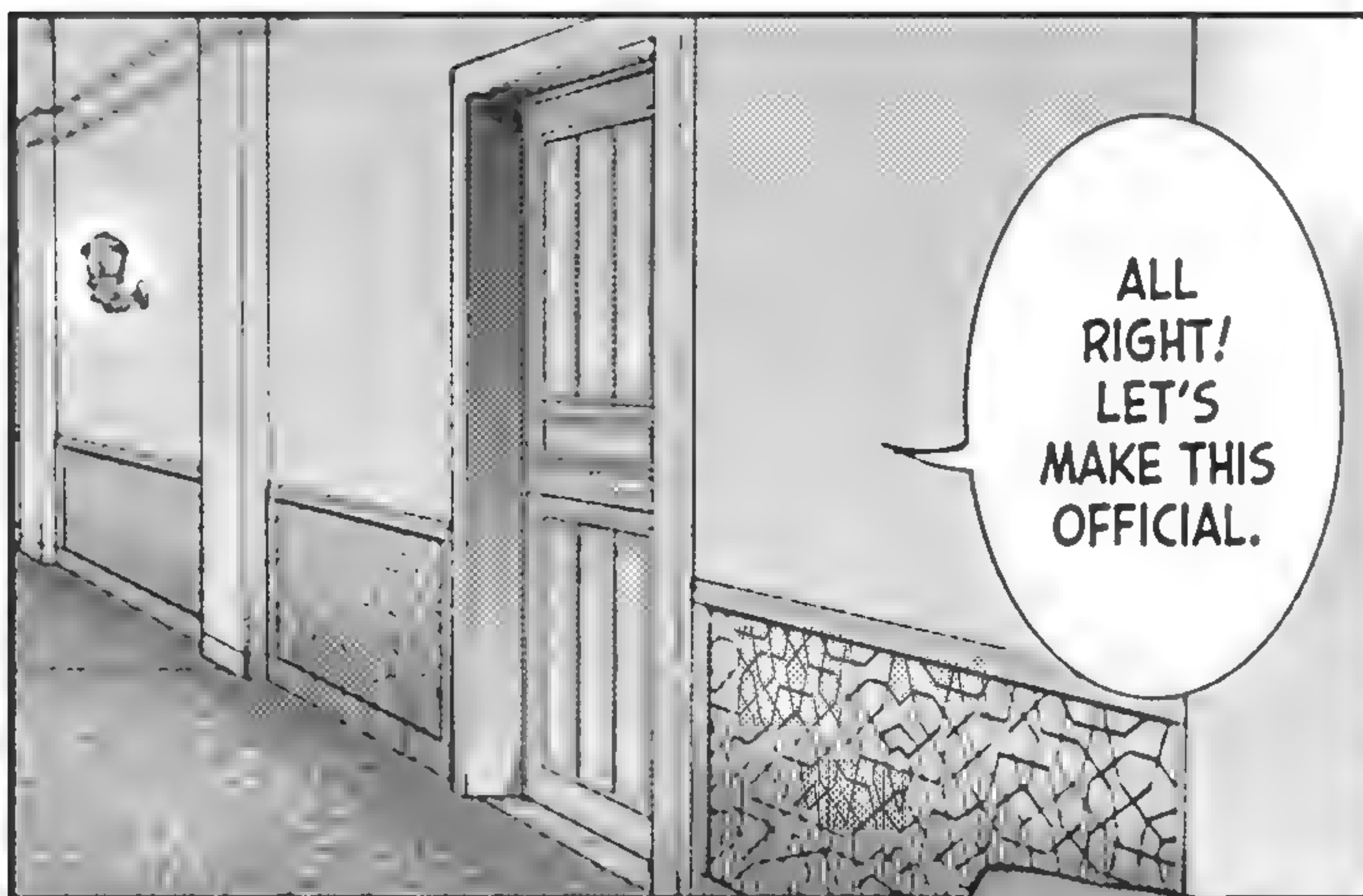
YES,  
MA'AM...

HIT THE  
LIGHTS,  
WOULD  
YOU?

LET'S  
GET SOME  
SLEEP.

WHATEVER.  
LISTEN,  
TOP BUNK'S  
MINE.









SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.

WE'RE ALL BUDS, SO LET'S TALK LIKE IT!

PSHHH! LIGHTEN UP, THEO!

IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE ROOMING WITH YOU BOTH!



I SAID WE'RE BUDS. BEST BUDS!!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?



WHOA, WHOA. FRIENDS?

HUH?! AREN'T WE?!

I REALLY AM HAPPY TO HAVE MADE FRIENDS SO QUICKLY, THOUGH.



THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING TOO CLOSE.

WE'VE GOT ONE SHORT YEAR TOGETHER AS TRAINEES BEFORE WE PART WAYS.



HMPH!

YOU TWO GO AHEAD AND PLAY BUDDY-BUDDY IF YOU WANT. BUT LEAVE ME OUT OF IT.



...I'D SAY WE'RE MORE RIVALS THAN FRIENDS.

AND GIVEN HOW OFFICE ASSIGNMENTS ARE DETERMINED...





HOW  
COULD  
YOU SAY  
THAT,  
ALV?!

HOW...

...!!!



...THE GIRLS  
HERE WILL EAT  
US ALIVE! WE  
HAVE TO BAND  
TOGETHER!

LISTEN! IF  
THE THREE  
OF US DON'T  
HAVE EACH  
OTHER'S  
BACKS...

LET  
GO OF  
ME.

CLAMP



WELL, I'VE  
GOT NEWS.  
NICE GIRLS  
DON'T PASS  
THE TEST.  
ONLY THE REAL  
PIECES OF  
WORK MAKE IT  
THROUGH. THE  
MONSTERS.  
THE RAVENOUS  
BEASTS!

LET ME  
GUESS! YOU  
THINK THAT  
GIRLS WHO  
BECOME  
KAFNA ARE  
PRIM AND  
PROPER!  
NICE,  
EVEN!



GRK!

THEO!

DOES IT  
HAVE TO BE A  
COMPETITION?  
CAN'T WE BE  
FRIENDS WITH  
THE GIRLS,  
TOO?

WH  
...?!

NO!





KAFNA WOMEN  
ARE BATTLE-  
HARDENED FROM  
CONSTANT WAR  
AGAINST EVERY  
EXPECTATION  
ANYONE'S EVER  
HAD OF  
THEM!

YOU WON'T  
FIND ANY DEMURE  
MAIDENS HERE!  
NONE OF *THESE*  
GIRLS ARE GONNA  
WALK THREE STEPS  
BEHIND OR OFFER  
QUIET NODS OF  
COMPLIANCE!



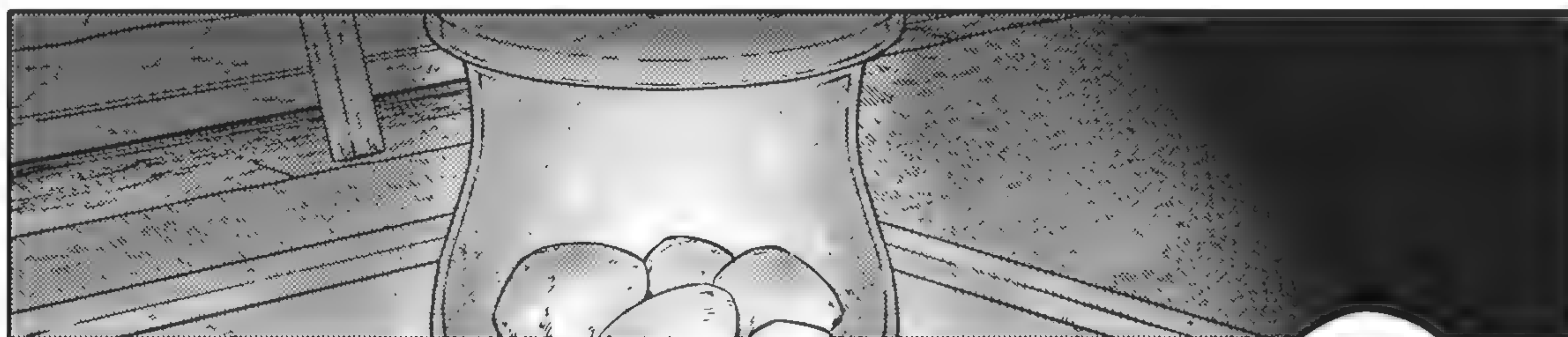
HOW  
DARE  
YOU?!

SOMETHING  
TELLS ME IT  
WAS LESS ABOUT  
PUTTING BOYS  
DOWN AND MORE  
ABOUT PUTTING  
YOU DOWN.



THE WAY  
THEY PUT  
BOYS DOWN,  
YOU'D THINK  
THE WHOLE  
WORLD WAS  
TURNED ON  
ITS HEAD!

OOH,  
AFTER  
WHAT  
THEY  
PUT ME  
THROUGH  
IN PREP  
SCHOOL  
...!



NOW  
YOU'RE  
EXAGGER-  
ATING.

WHEN SHE  
GETS ANGRY,  
YOU CAN SEE  
A *SERPENT*  
COILED UP AT  
HER BACK!

ESPECIALLY  
MY MOM.



I'M THE  
YOUNGEST  
OF NINE.  
ALL GIRLS  
BUT ME.

MY MOM'S A  
KAFNA, AND  
TWO OF MY  
SISTERS,  
TOO.

THEY'RE  
AS OVER-  
BEARING  
AS THE  
REST.



OOPS!  
SORRY,  
ALV. MY  
BAD.

ENOUGH  
GABBING.  
GO TO  
SLEEP.





THAT'S  
HOW I  
SEE IT,  
ANYWAY.

GUYS THAT  
BECOME  
KAFNA? THERE  
ISN'T A BAD  
APPLE IN THE  
BUNCH.



THERE'S  
SO MUCH I  
WANNA SAY  
TO MY NEW  
PALS.

I'M  
JUST SO  
RELIEVED,  
Y'KNOW?

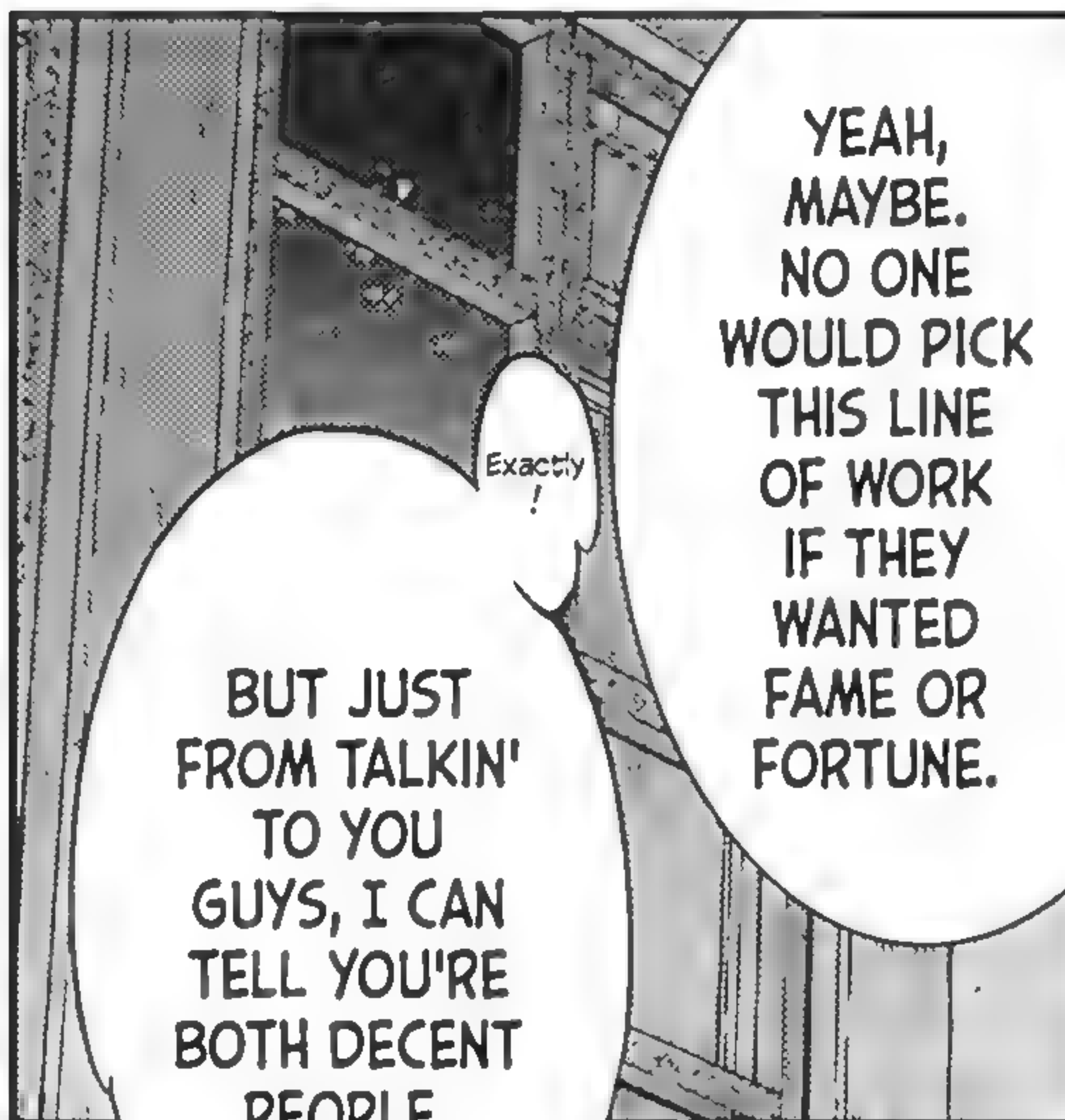


OF  
COURSE  
YOU'RE  
GOOD GUYS.  
YOU HAVE  
TO BE!

BUT I  
DO!

YOU DON'T  
EVEN KNOW  
US. ME OR  
BLONDIE.

DUNNO  
WHAT  
MAKES  
YOU THINK  
WE'RE  
PALS.



BUT JUST  
FROM TALKIN'  
TO YOU  
GUYS, I CAN  
TELL YOU'RE  
BOTH DECENT  
PEOPLE.

Exactly!

YEAH,  
MAYBE.  
NO ONE  
WOULD PICK  
THIS LINE  
OF WORK  
IF THEY  
WANTED  
FAME OR  
FORTUNE.



BOTH THE  
GUYS AND THE  
GIRLS WHO  
WANT THIS  
LIFE HAVE  
TO GIVE IT  
EVERYTHING  
THEY'VE  
GOT.

DON'T GET  
ME WRONG. I  
THINK GIRLS  
WHO BECOME  
KAFNA ARE  
TRYIN' THEIR  
BEST, TOO.



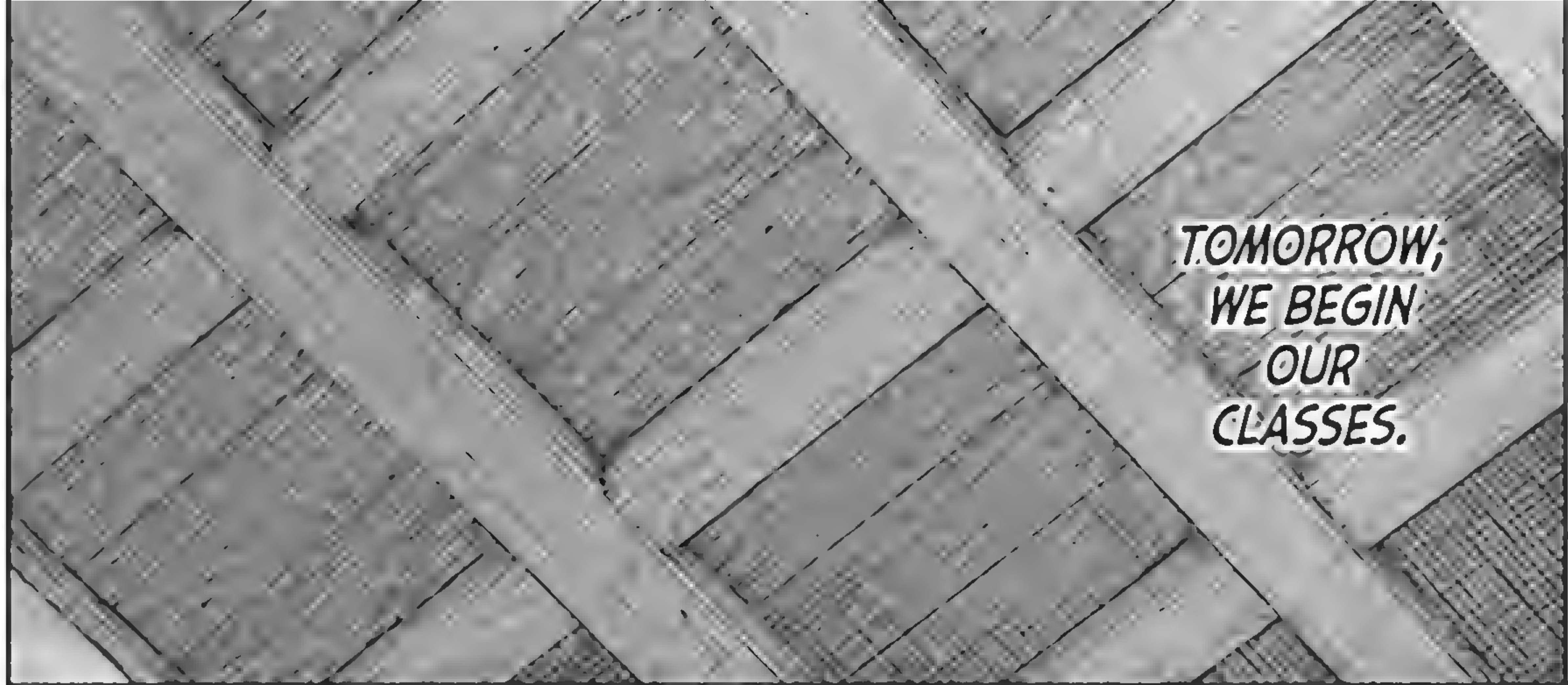
HEHE...  
HE'S JUST  
TRYING TO  
BE FRIENDLY.  
AT LEAST, I  
THINK HE IS.

LAST  
WARNING.  
GO TO  
BED. NOT  
ANOTHER  
WORD.

I WAS JUST  
THINKING  
MAYBE YOU  
MIGHT LIKE  
TO FEEL TALL  
AT LEAST  
WHILE YOU'RE  
ASLEEP.

HEY! I  
FORGOT  
TO ASK.  
YOU WANNA  
SWAP FOR A  
TOP BUNK,  
ALV?





TOMORROW,  
WE BEGIN  
OUR  
CLASSES.



I'M GETTING  
SO WORKED  
UP THINKING  
ABOUT IT...

OH,  
NO.



I WONDER  
WHAT OUR  
DAYS IN  
TRAINING  
WILL BE  
LIKE.

I'M AS  
NERVOUS  
AS I AM  
EXCITED.



...I DON'T  
KNOW IF  
I'LL BE  
ABLE TO  
FALL—

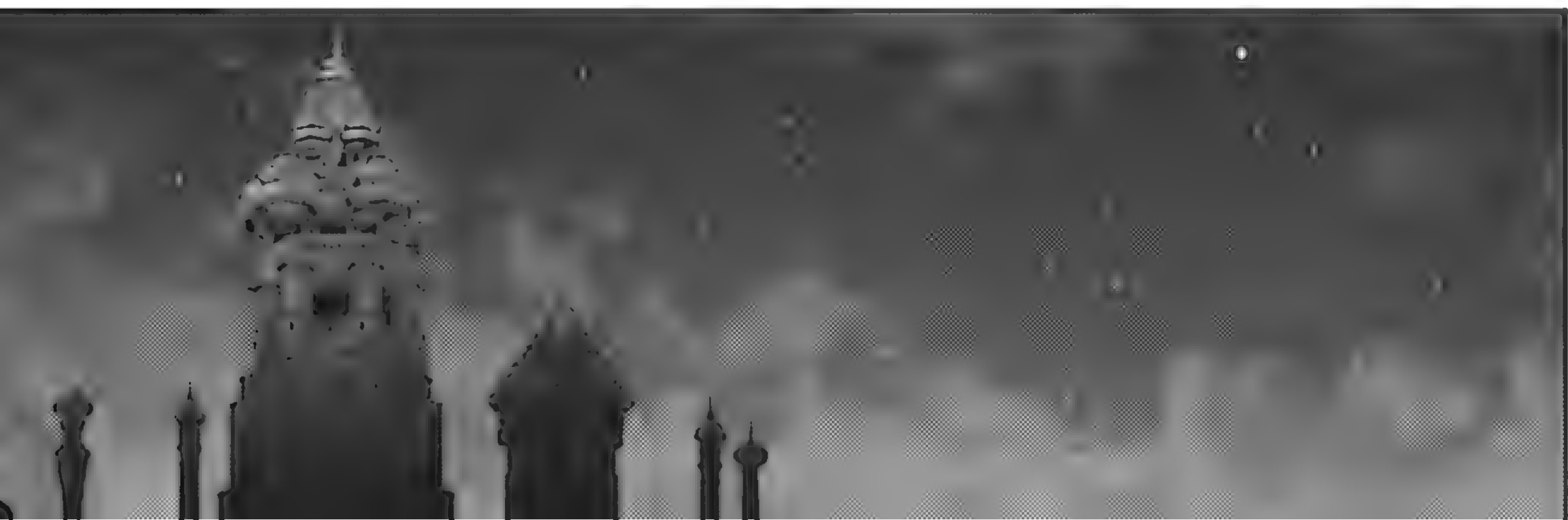


LUCKY. I  
WISH I FELL  
ASLEEP THAT  
EASILY.

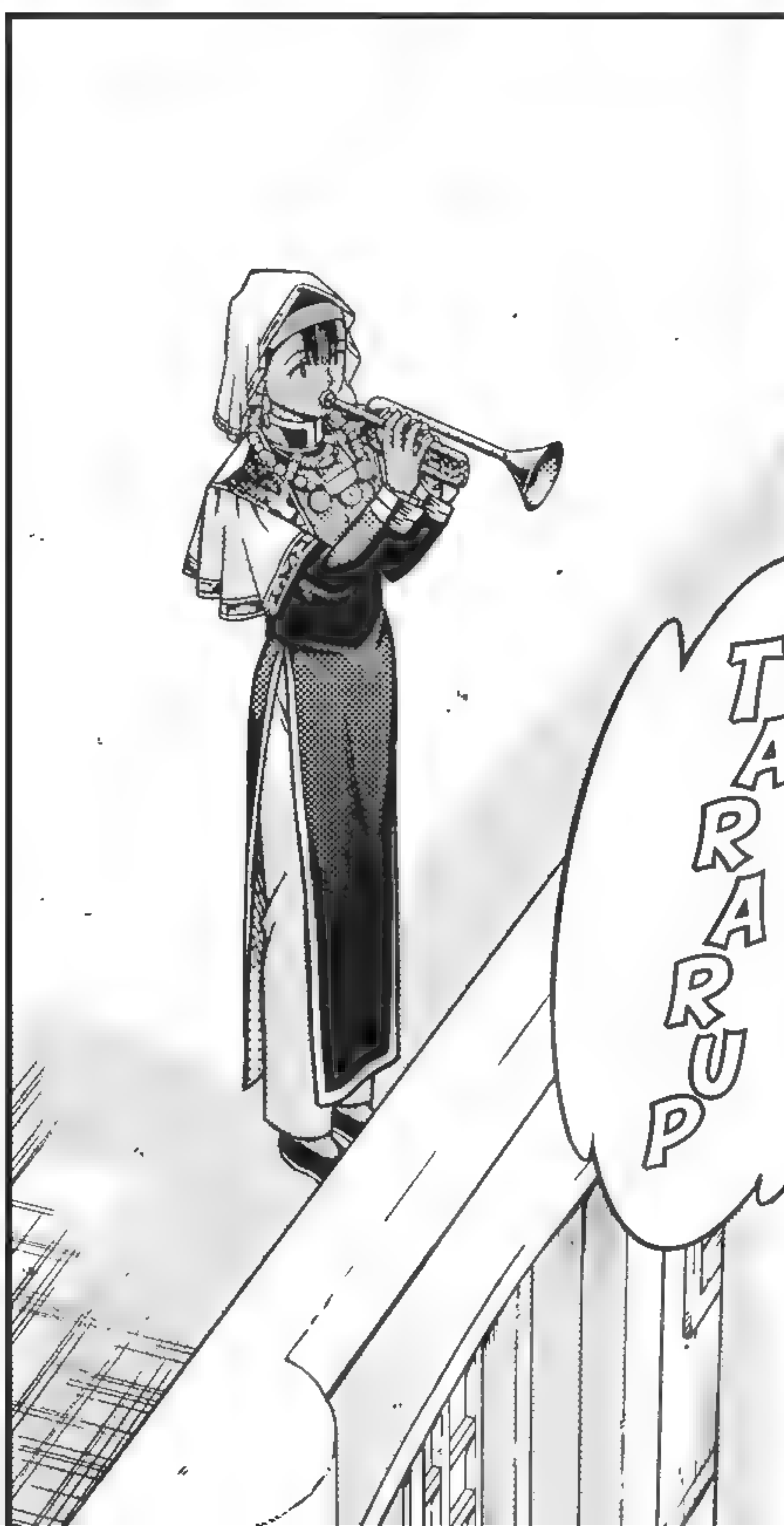
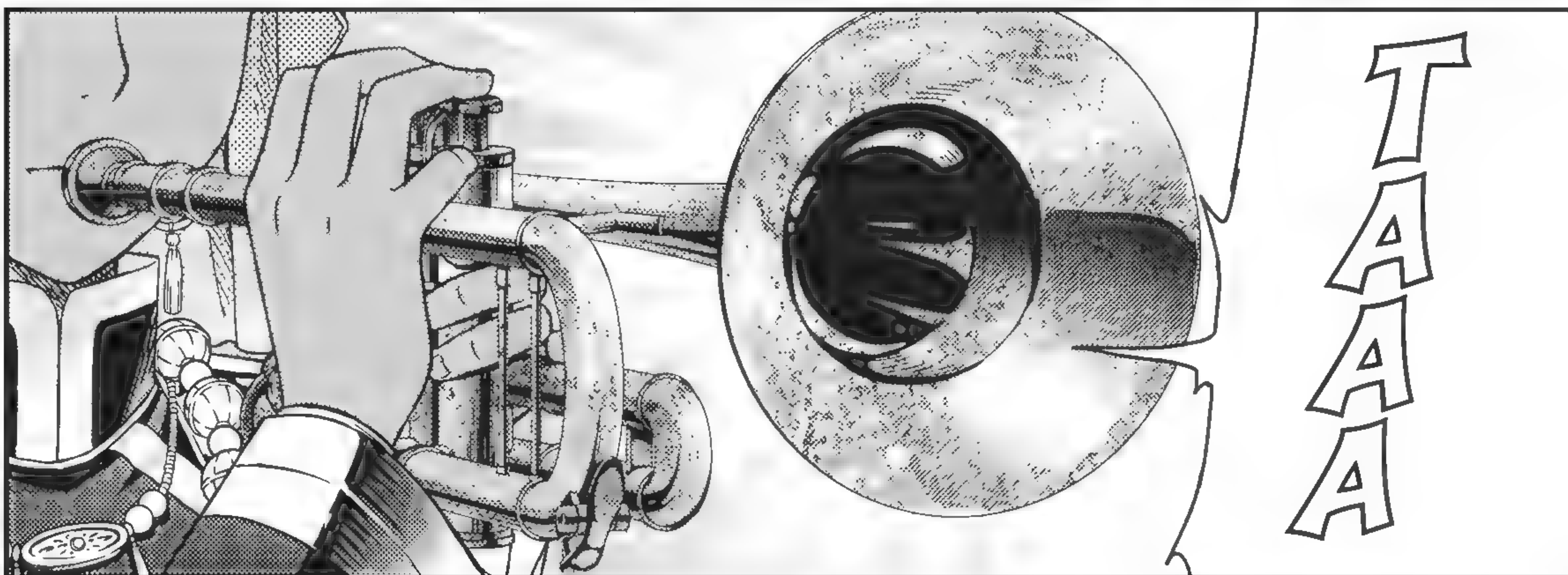
PFF

PFF...

ZZZ









T  
A  
A  
A

T  
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A

T  
A  
T  
A  
T  
A  
A

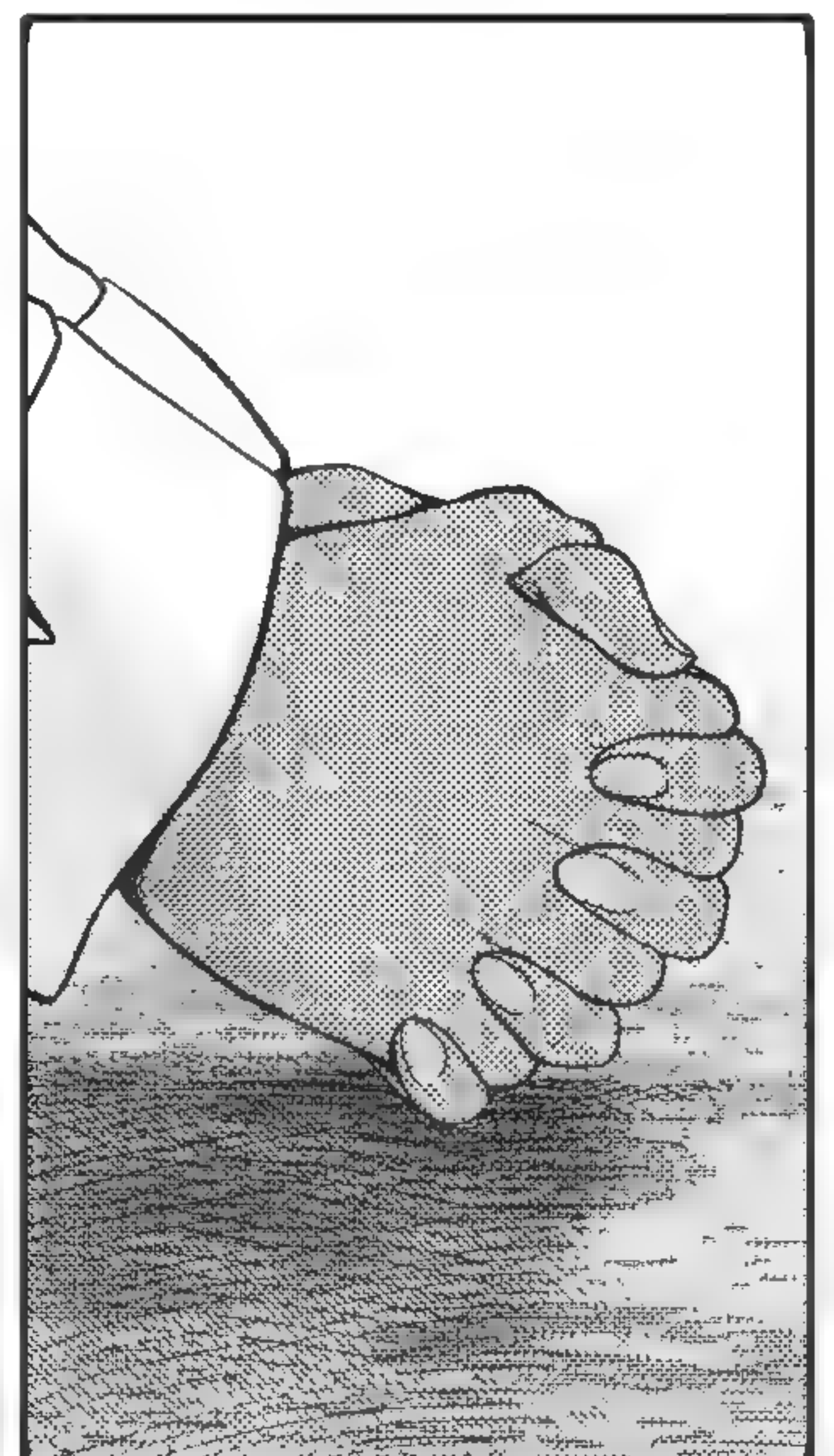
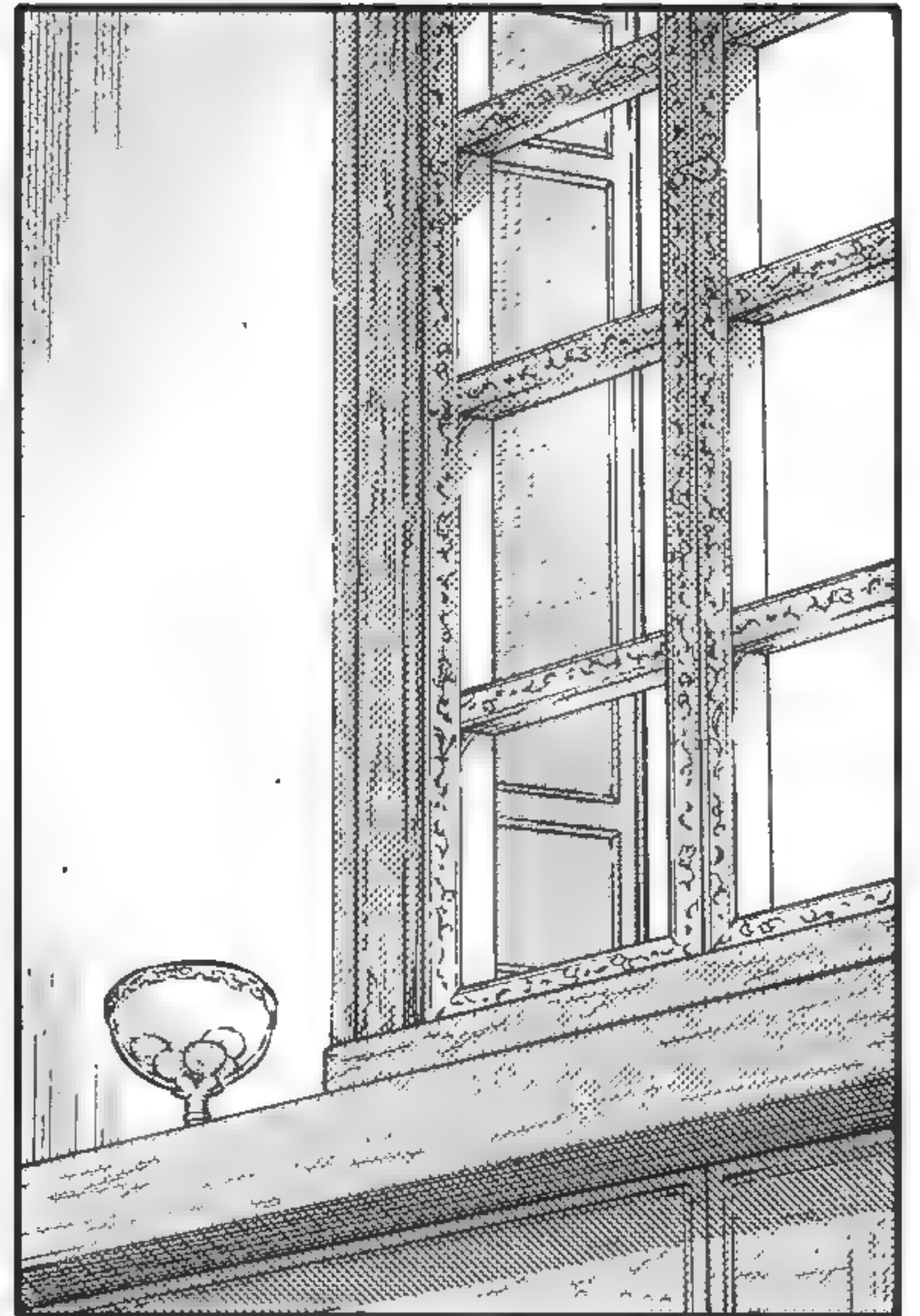
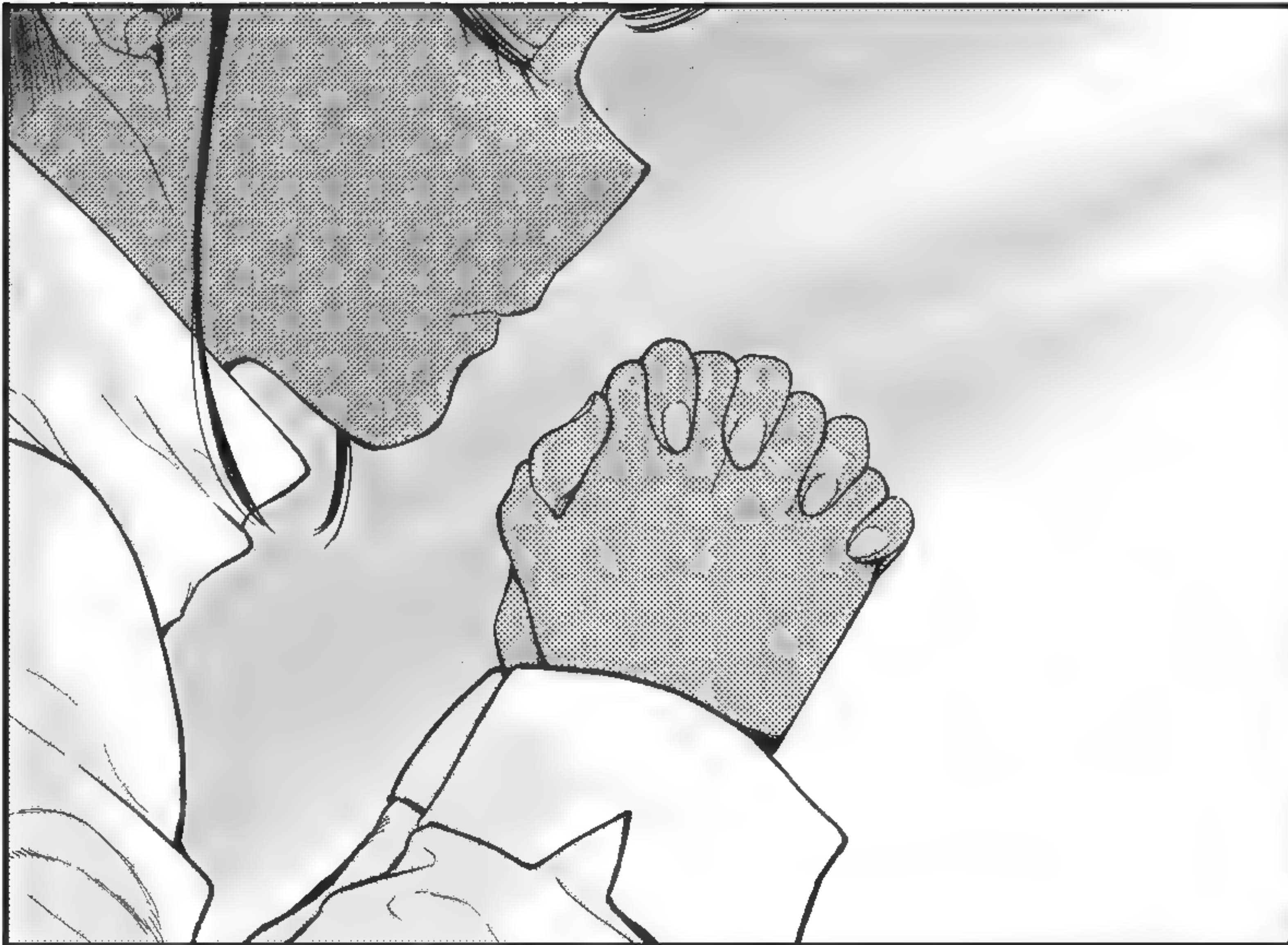
T  
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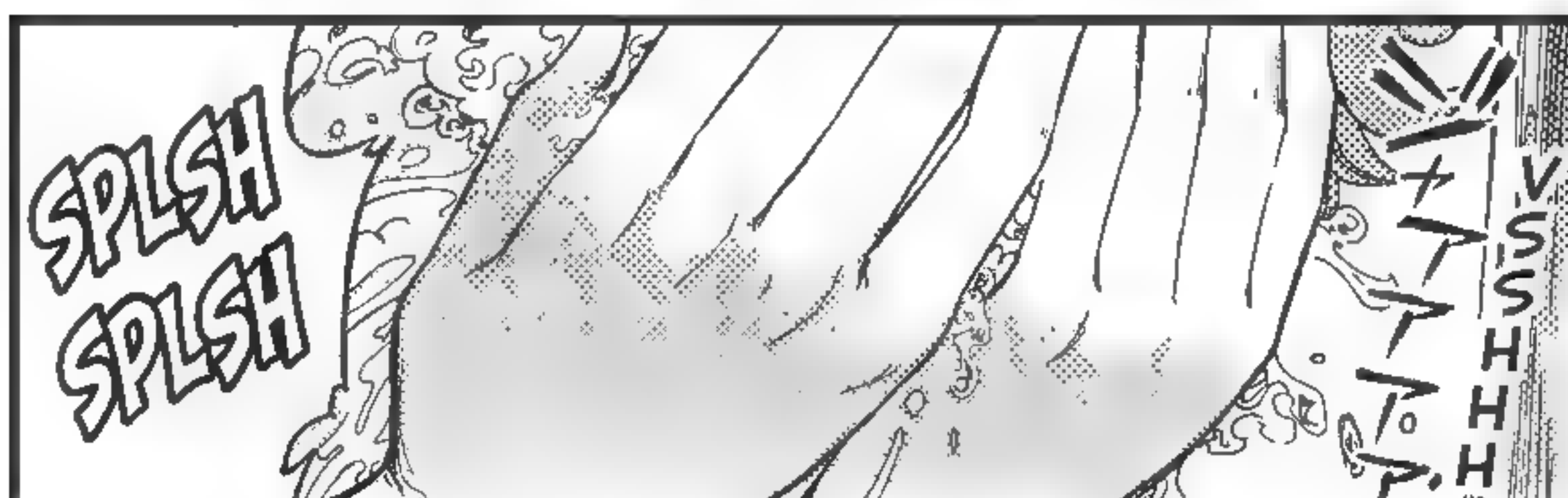
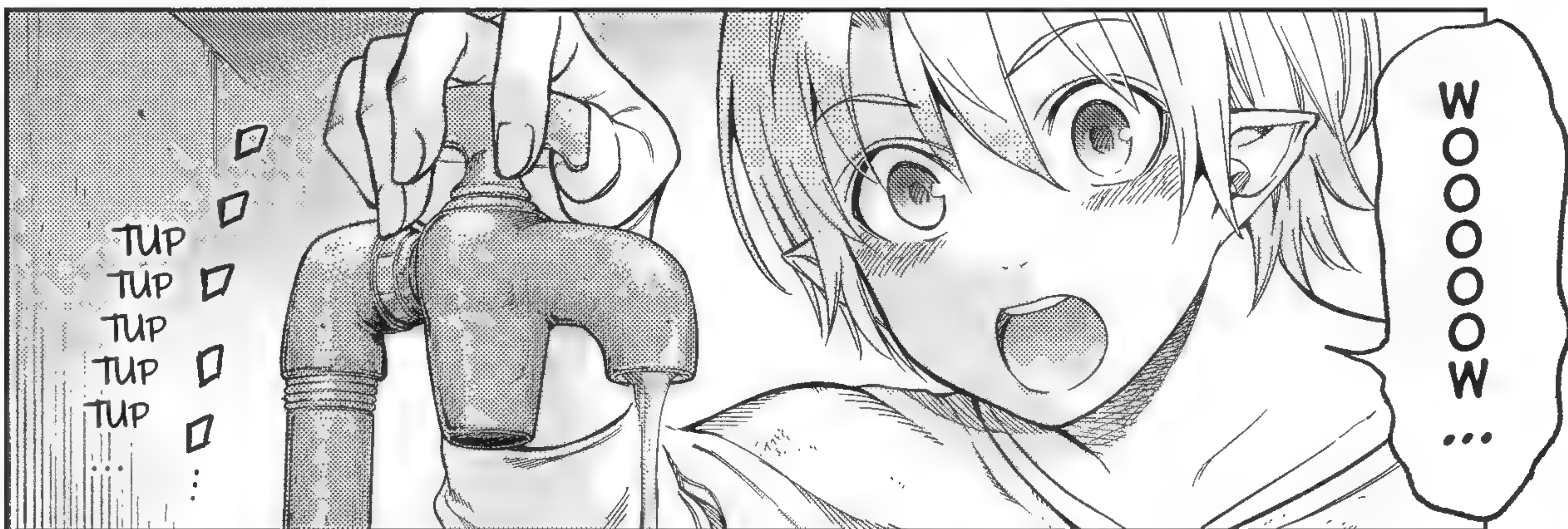
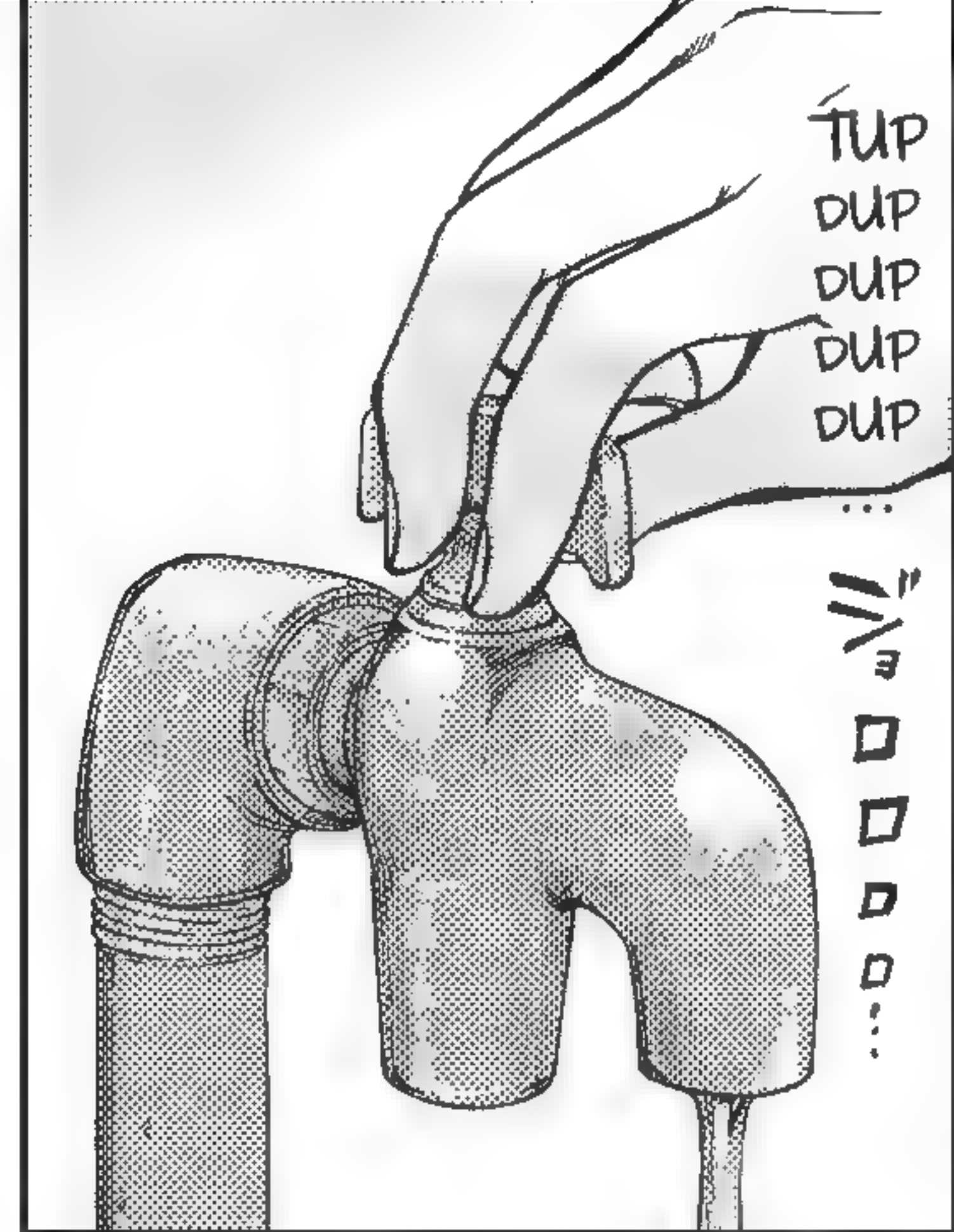
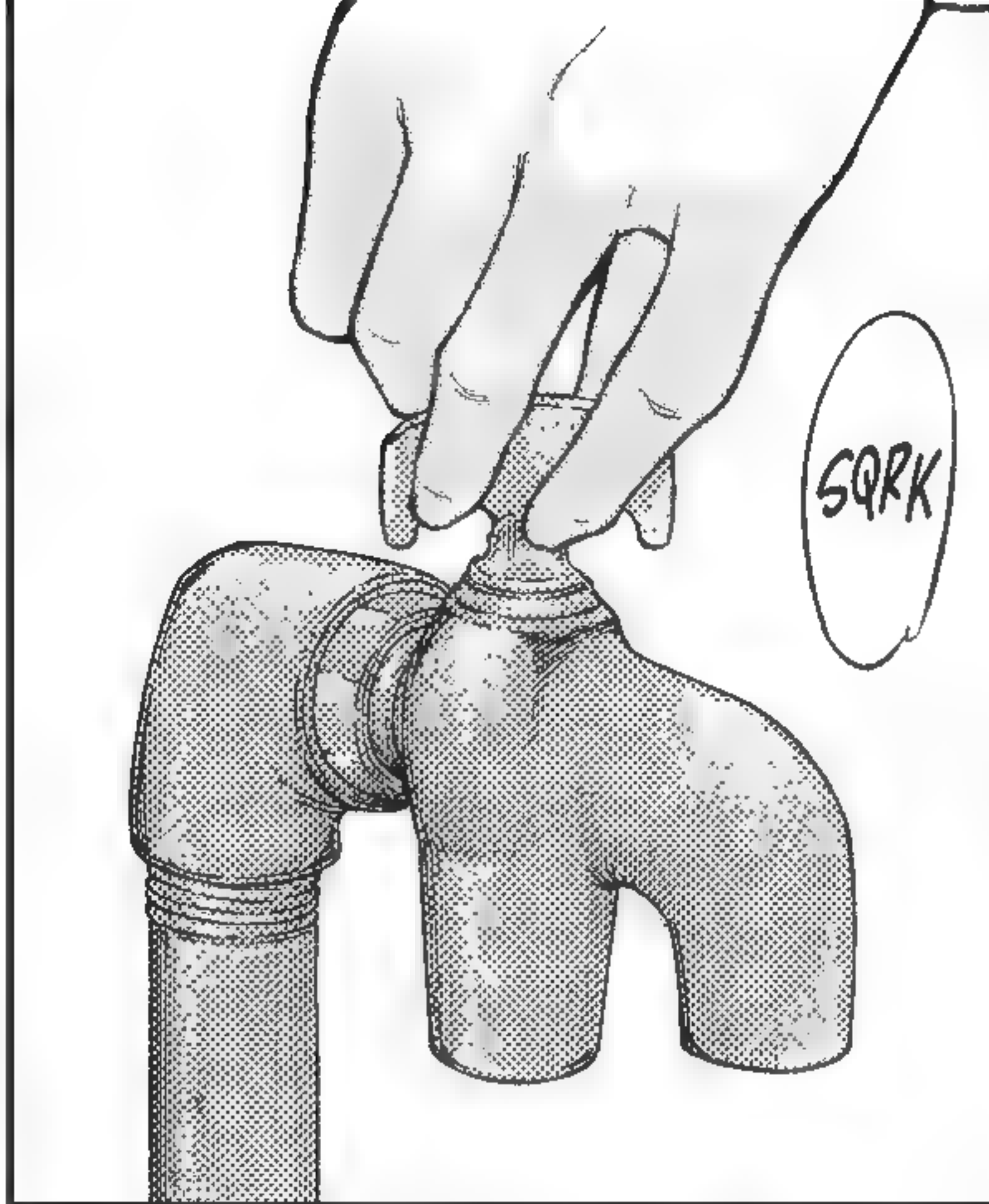
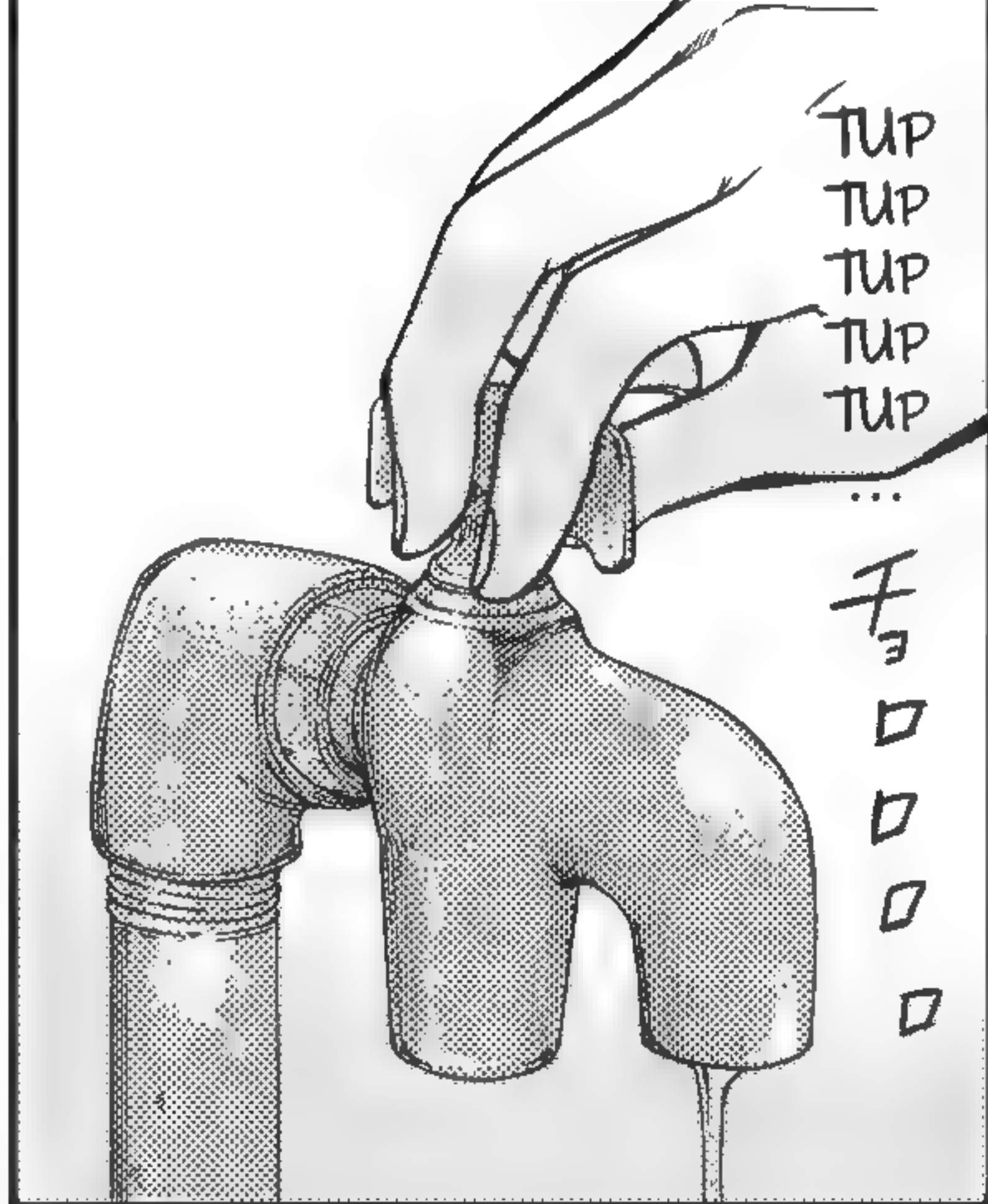
















Wow...  
How  
nifty...

POKE  
POKE  
POKE



OOOOH.  
ALV'S  
A *BAD*  
BOY!

I GREW  
UP ASIN,  
BUT I DON'T  
DO THE  
PRAYERS.

THEY'RE  
A WASTE  
OF TIME.

SINCE NEITHER  
OF YOU ARE  
DOING MORNING  
PRAYERS, I TAKE  
IT WE'RE ALL  
MANACCHAN  
HERE?



REALLY?  
ARE YOU  
SURE YOU  
DON'T  
MIND?!

*YOU*  
SHOULD  
MIND!

EW. THAT IS  
NOT SOME-  
THING YOU  
GIVE TO  
SOMEONE.

YOU'RE  
IN LUCK.  
I PACKED  
AN EXTRA.  
YOU CAN  
HAVE MY  
OLD ONE  
IF YOU  
WANT!

WHAT'S  
THE DEAL,  
THEO?  
NEVER SEEN  
A TOOTH-  
BRUSH?

UM... YOU  
KNOW... A  
PIECE OF  
CLOTH OR  
A TOOTH-  
PICK...

HOW DO  
YOU CLEAN  
YOUR TEETH  
AFTER YOU  
EAT?



LOOK  
WHO WASN'T  
LISTENING  
YESTERDAY.  
BIG SURPRISE.

UM, DIDN'T  
THEY TELL US  
TO GET OUR  
MEASUREMENTS  
TAKEN FIRST?

ALL RIGHT!  
LET'S GET  
CHANGED  
AND GET  
OURSELVES  
SOME  
CHOW!





HUH?

HOLD  
UP!

WH...!  
THEO!



IS THIS  
FOR  
REAL?!

WHAT'S  
ALL THIS  
MUSCLE?!



ALV!  
LOOK!  
DID  
YOU  
SEE--

THIS IS  
SO COOL!  
YOU'RE  
A MAN  
AMONG  
MEN!

THANK  
YOU VERY  
MUCH!

HERE YOU  
ARE. YOUR  
TEMPORARY  
VESTMENTS.

OH, UH...  
I USED TO  
WORK ON A  
MASONRY  
CREW.



YES, ERM,  
SORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT.

They're just  
temporary.

THEY  
GAVE ME  
GIRLS'  
CLOTHES.

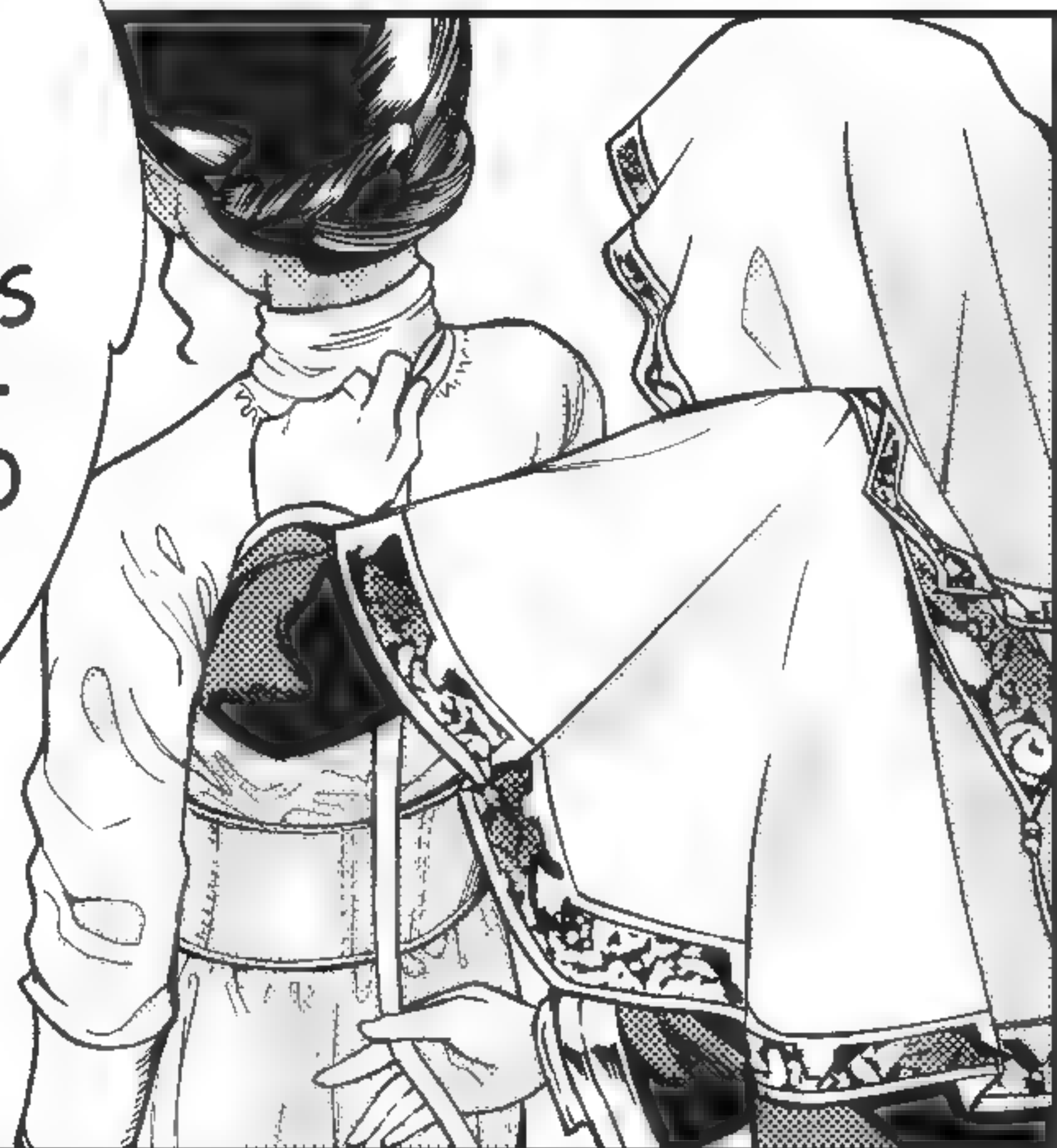
UH...  
SOME-  
THING  
WRONG?

What's with  
the sour  
look?





WOULDN'T  
IT BE BETTER  
TO TAKE OUR  
MEASUREMENTS  
AFTER BREAK-  
FAST? JUST TO  
BE SAFE?



I DON'T  
THINK IT'S  
GONNA MAKE  
THAT BIG A  
DIFFERENCE...



HA  
HA!

RISE  
AND  
SHINE!

AHA  
HA!

EEEEEEK!!!



OOP.

AHA  
HA!

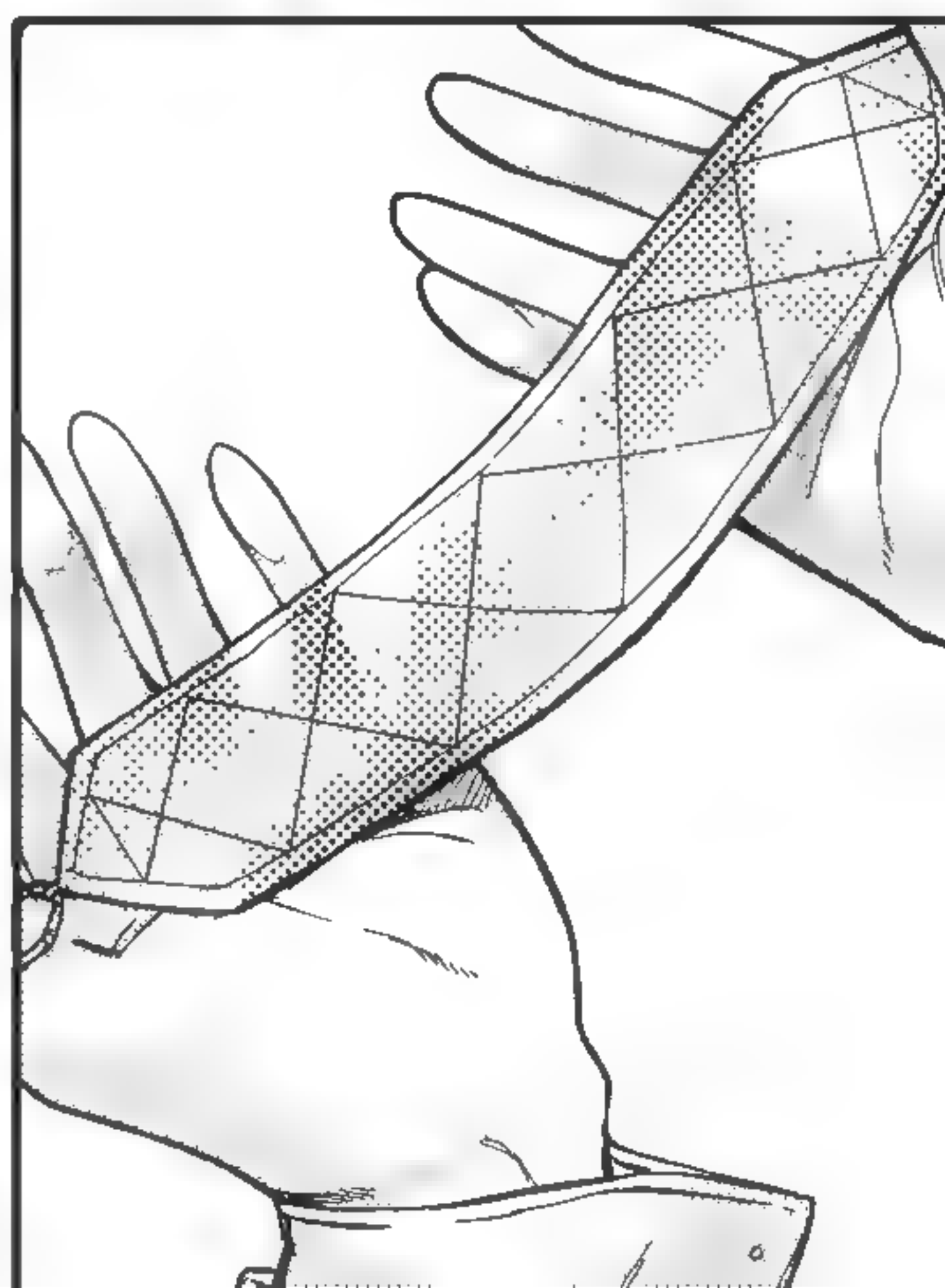
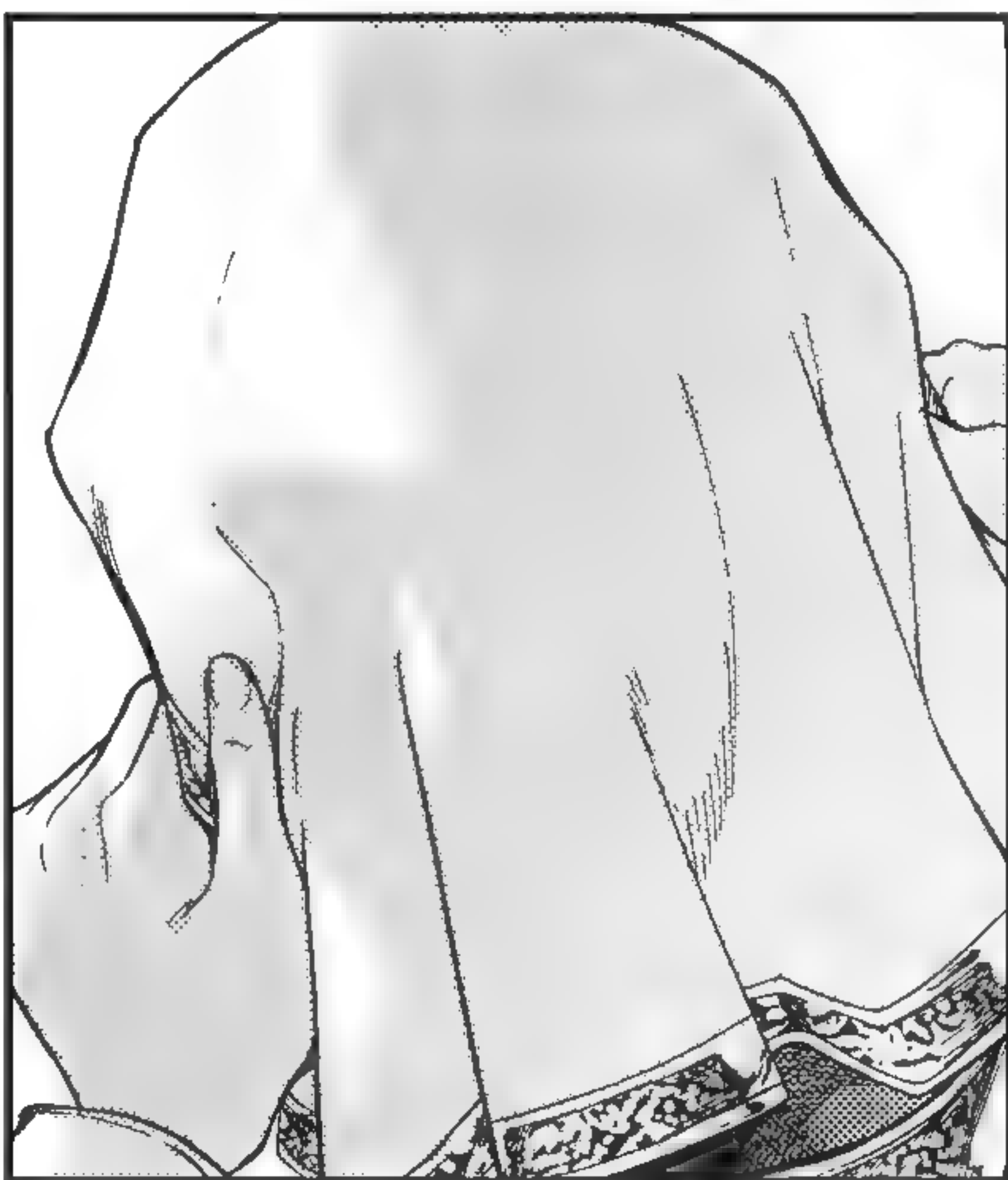
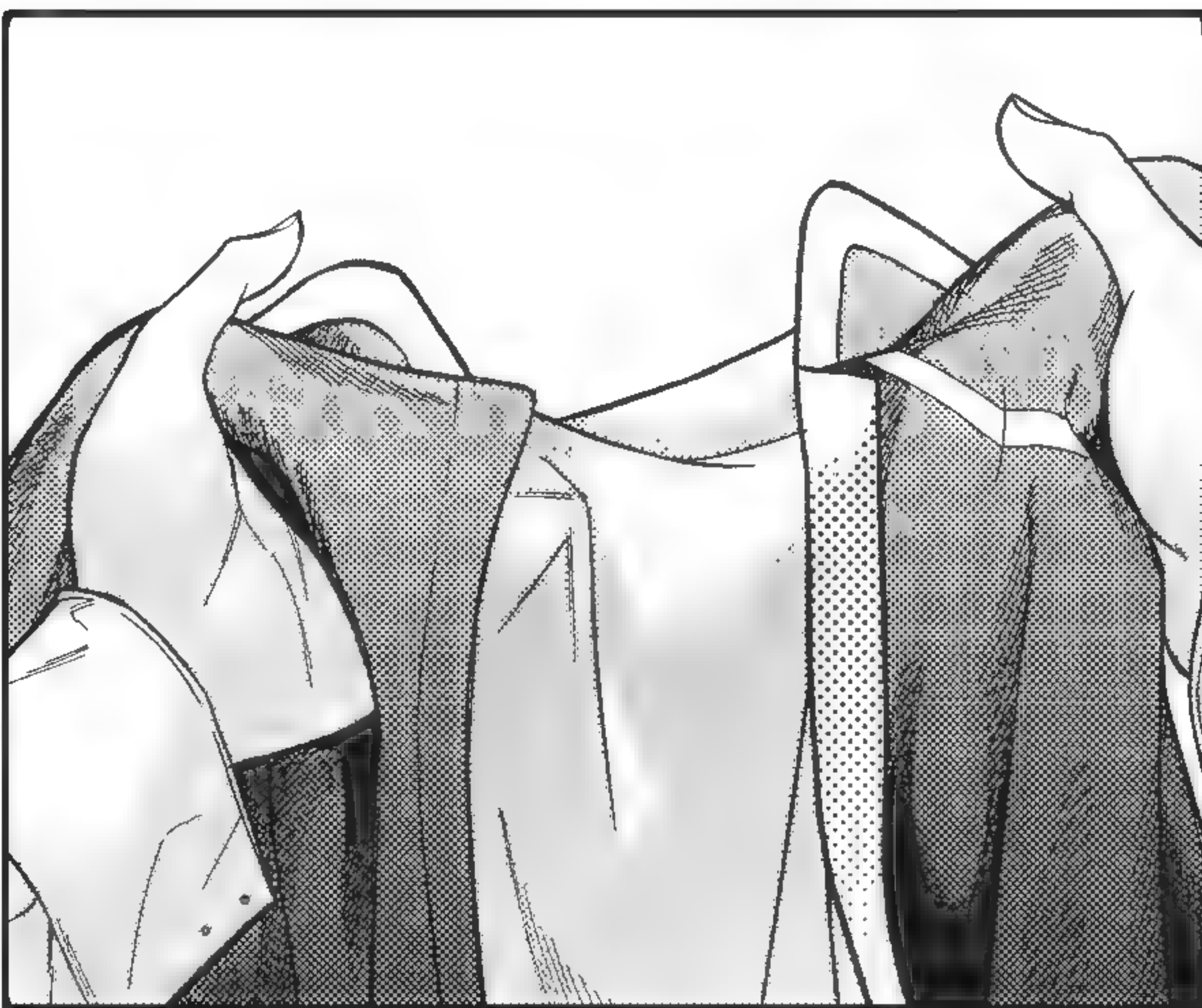
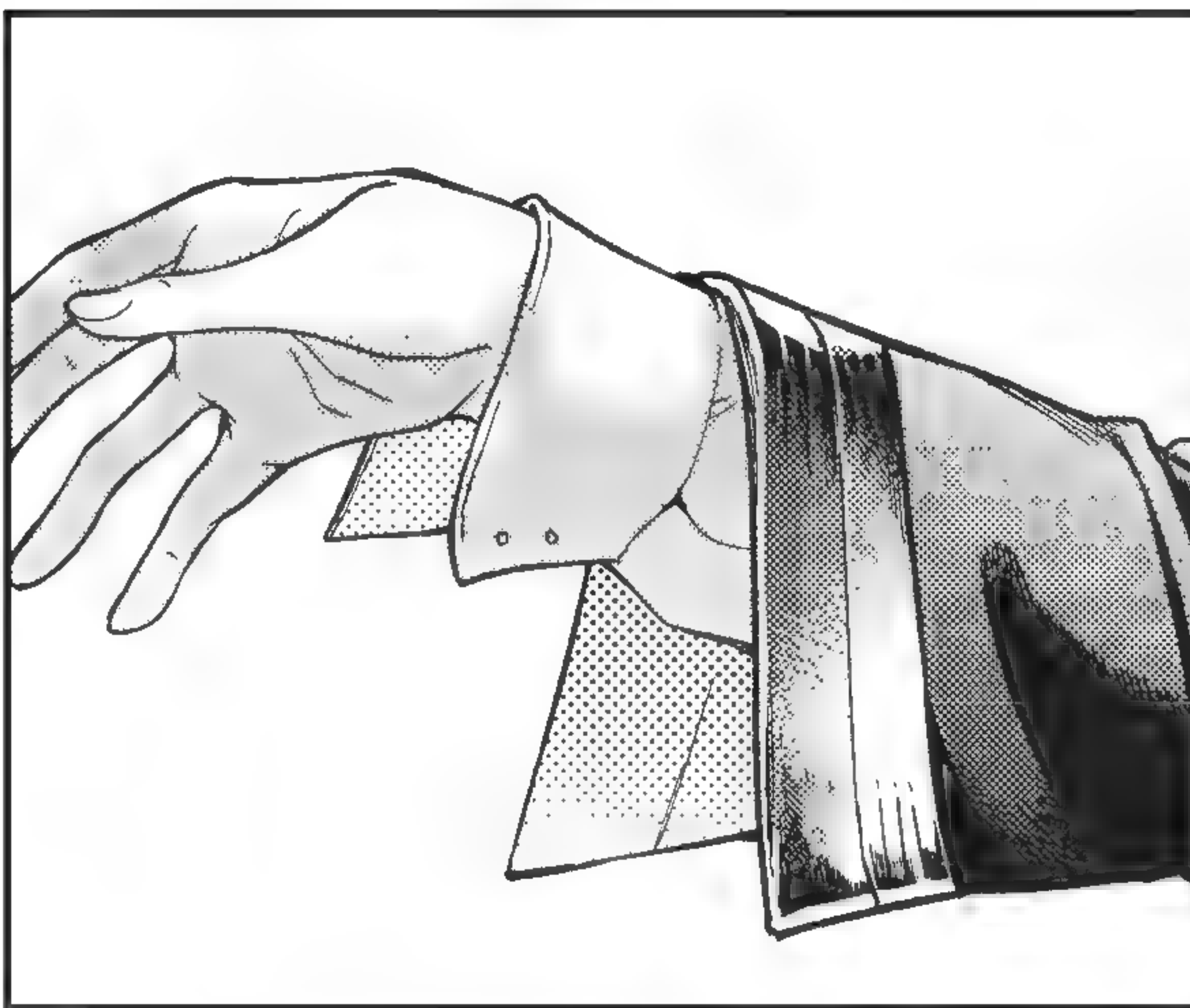
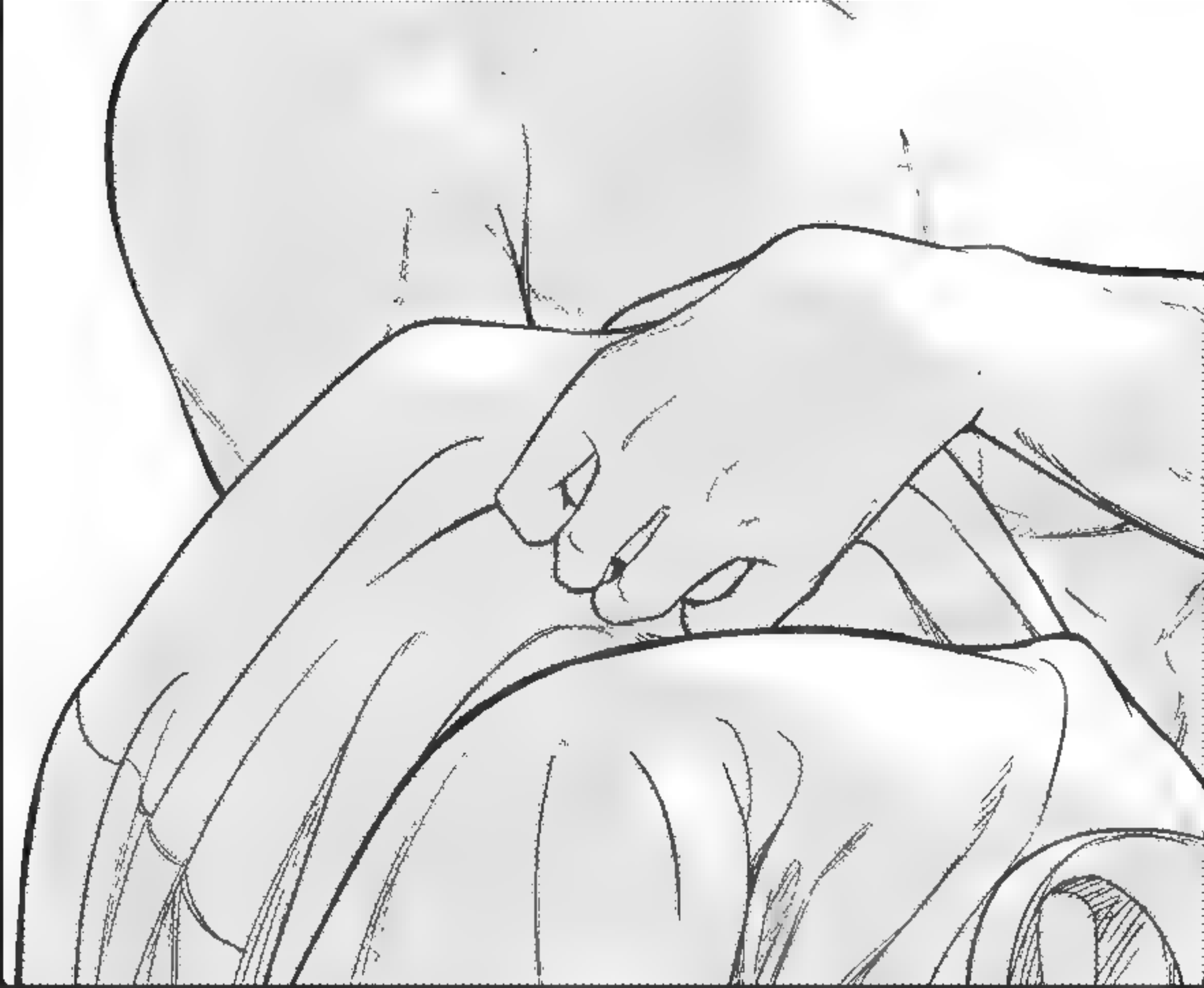
HA  
HA!

DANG,  
DON'T YOU  
FIND THIS  
OUTFIT  
DRAFTY?

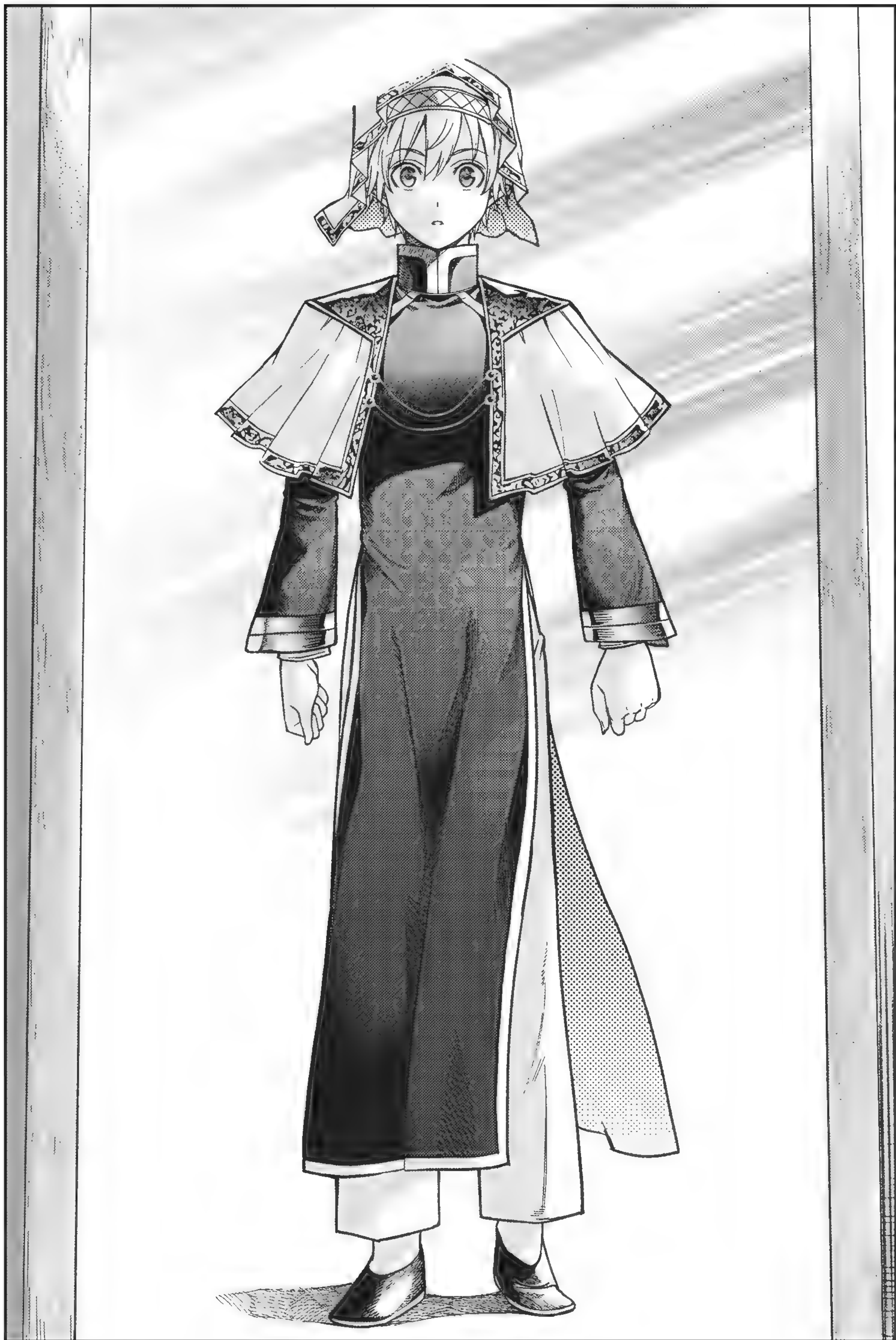
KA-  
CHAK

ARE  
YOU TWO  
AWAKE?  
IT'S TIME  
TO-















Talis-  
mans  
worn  
about a  
kafna's  
neck.

Tikeeka

NOT  
SO  
FAST.

WOW.  
I CAN'T  
WAIT TO  
PUT SOME  
TIKEEKA  
ON.

AN ITTY-BITTY  
TRAINEE JANGLING  
AROUND LIKE SOME  
KINDA HOTSHOT?  
THE OLDER KAFNA  
WOULDN'T LET  
YOU HEAR THE  
END OF IT!



LOOKIN'  
GOOD,  
THEO!



THANKS!  
SAME  
TO YOU  
TWO!

THIS IS  
IT, MY  
BRETHREN!

WHAAP

ALL  
RIGHT,  
THEN!



OUR  
BATTLEFIELD?  
THE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY!

OFF WE  
GO TO  
WAR!

WHO PUT  
YOU IN  
CHARGE?



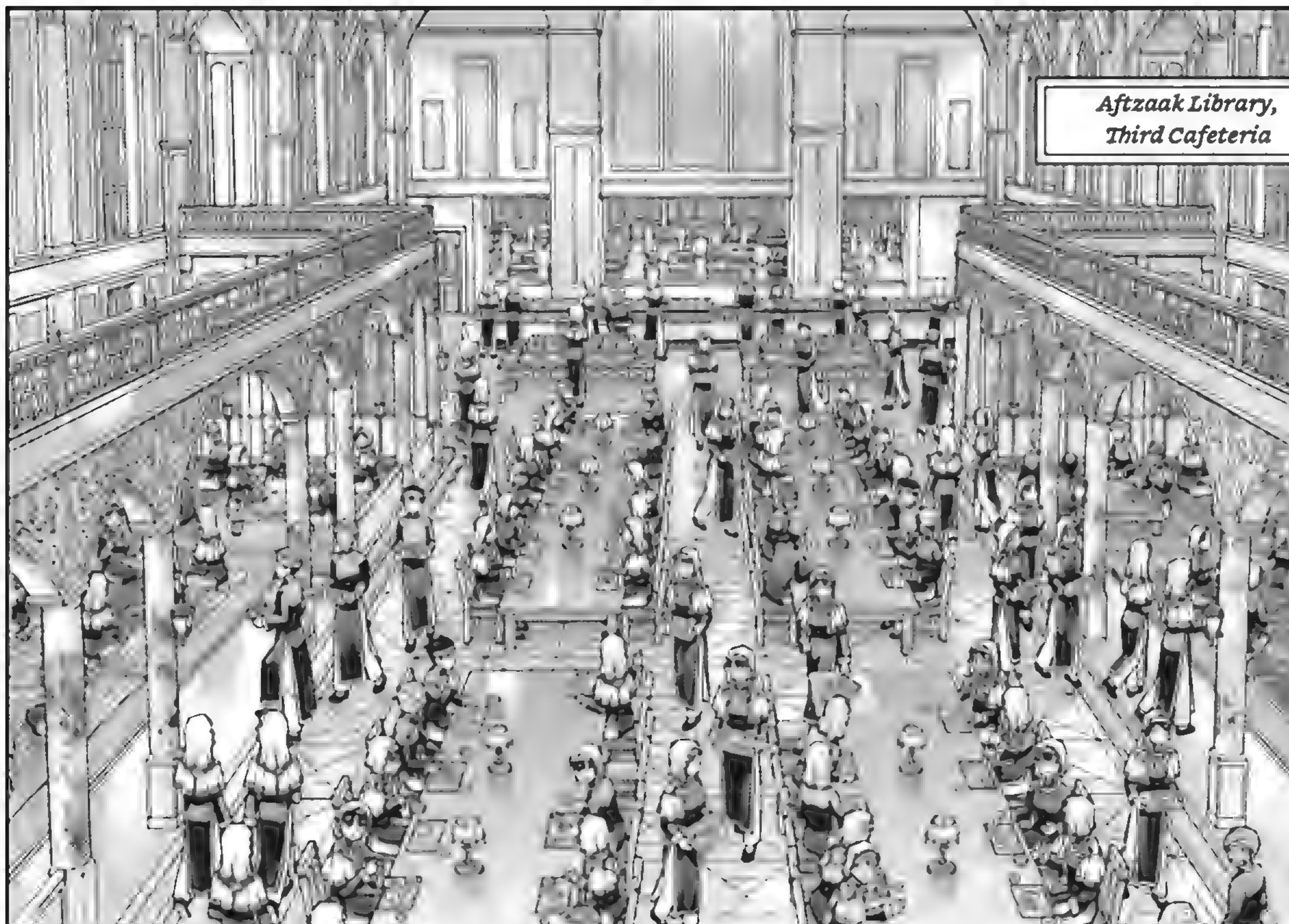
*The Aftzaak  
Central  
Library...*

*This is the  
headquarters for  
the continent's  
texts, watched  
over by a  
thousand  
kafna and  
four thousand  
kohkwa.*

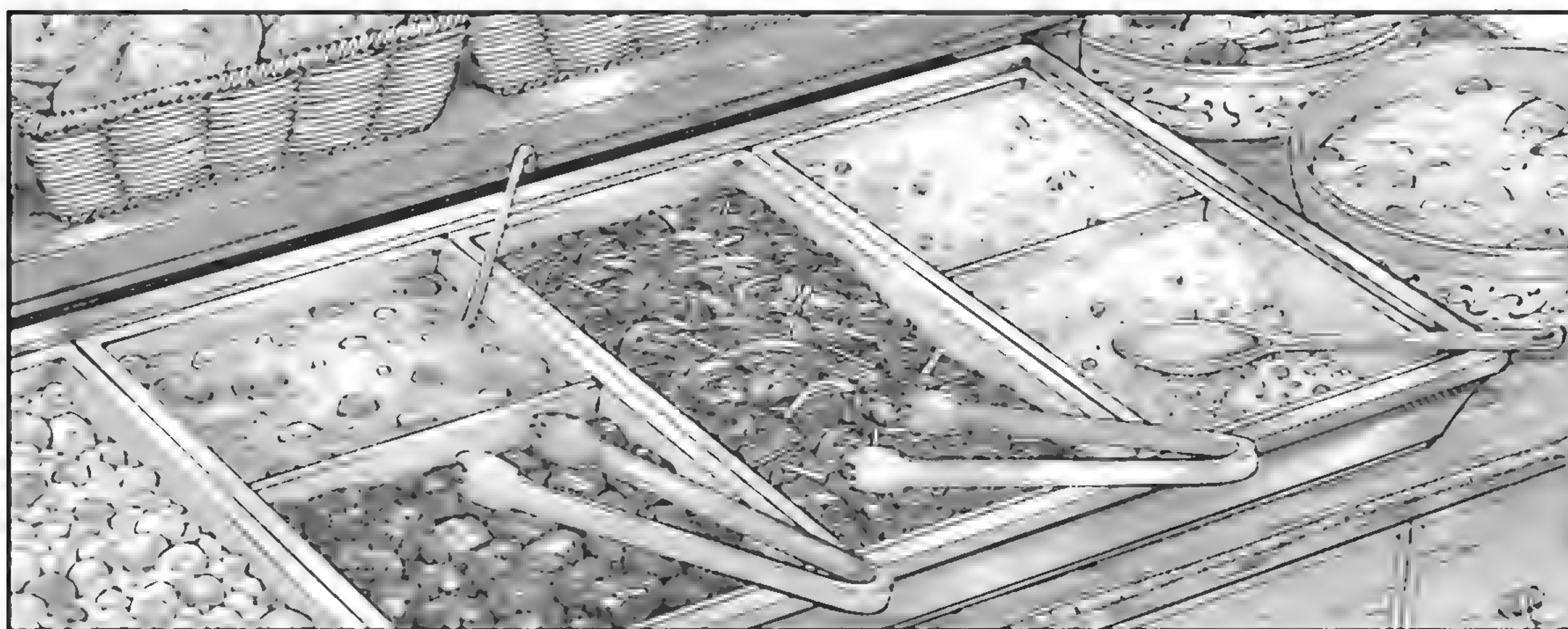
*The talented few  
able to surmount  
the grueling kafna  
exam won privilege  
to work among  
these walls. Their  
first year was  
spent in training,  
learning the  
arts of their new  
profession.*

\* KOHKWA: ANCILLARY STAFF WHO ASSIST THE KAFNA IN THEIR DUTIES.





Aftzaak Library,  
Third Cafeteria



OF  
COURSE!

EAT UP!  
YOU TRAINEES  
NEED YOUR  
STRENGTH!

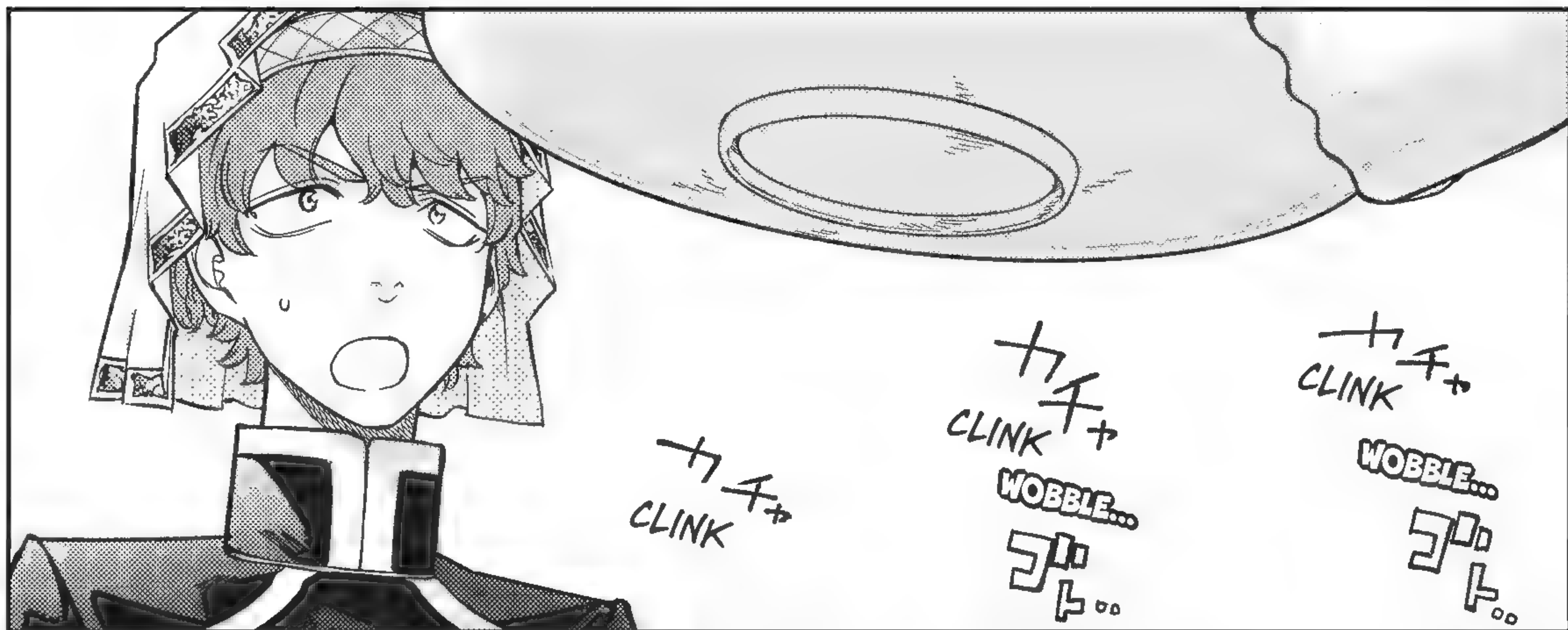
YOU  
MEAN  
I CAN  
TAKE AS  
MUCH AS  
I LIKE?



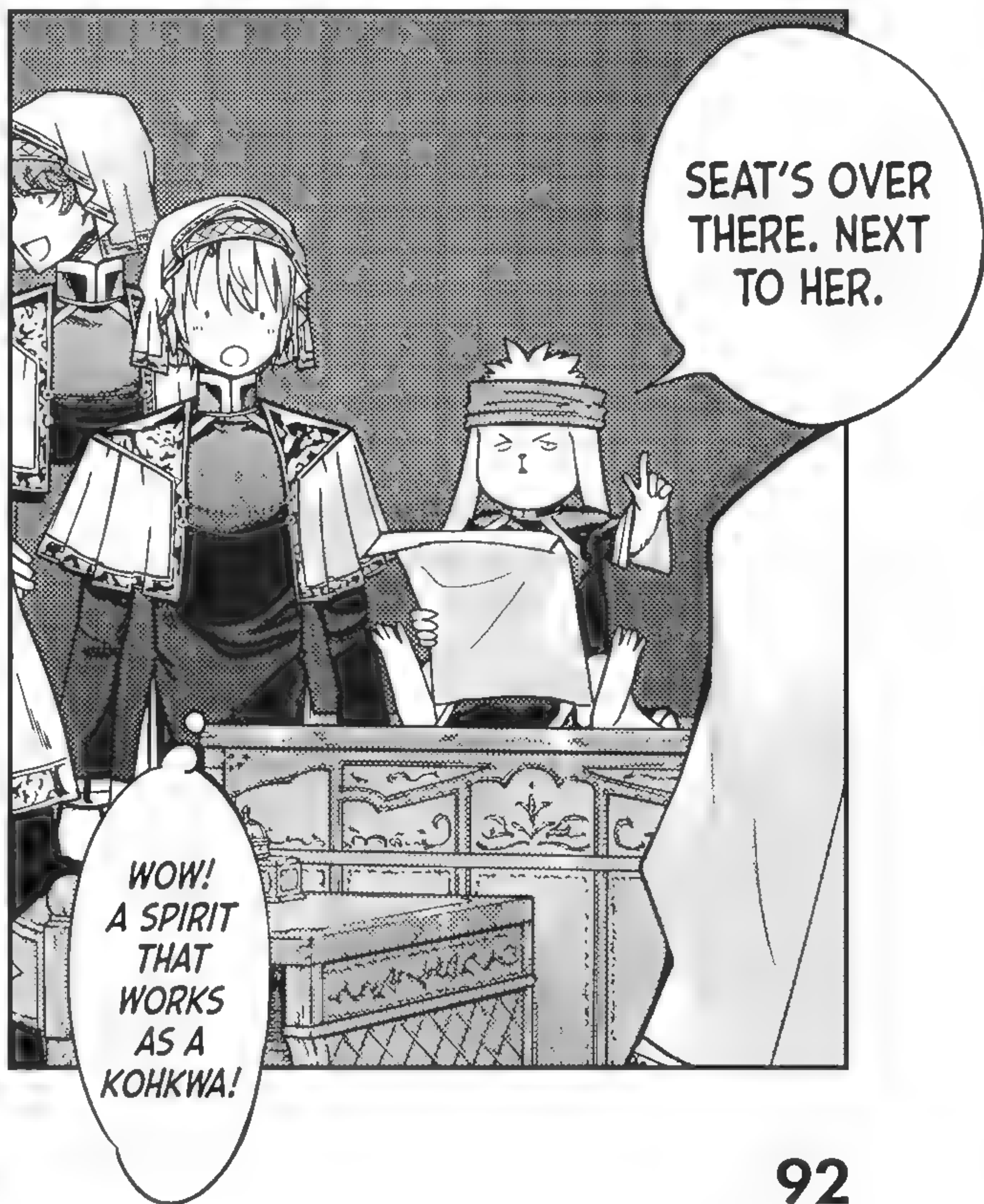
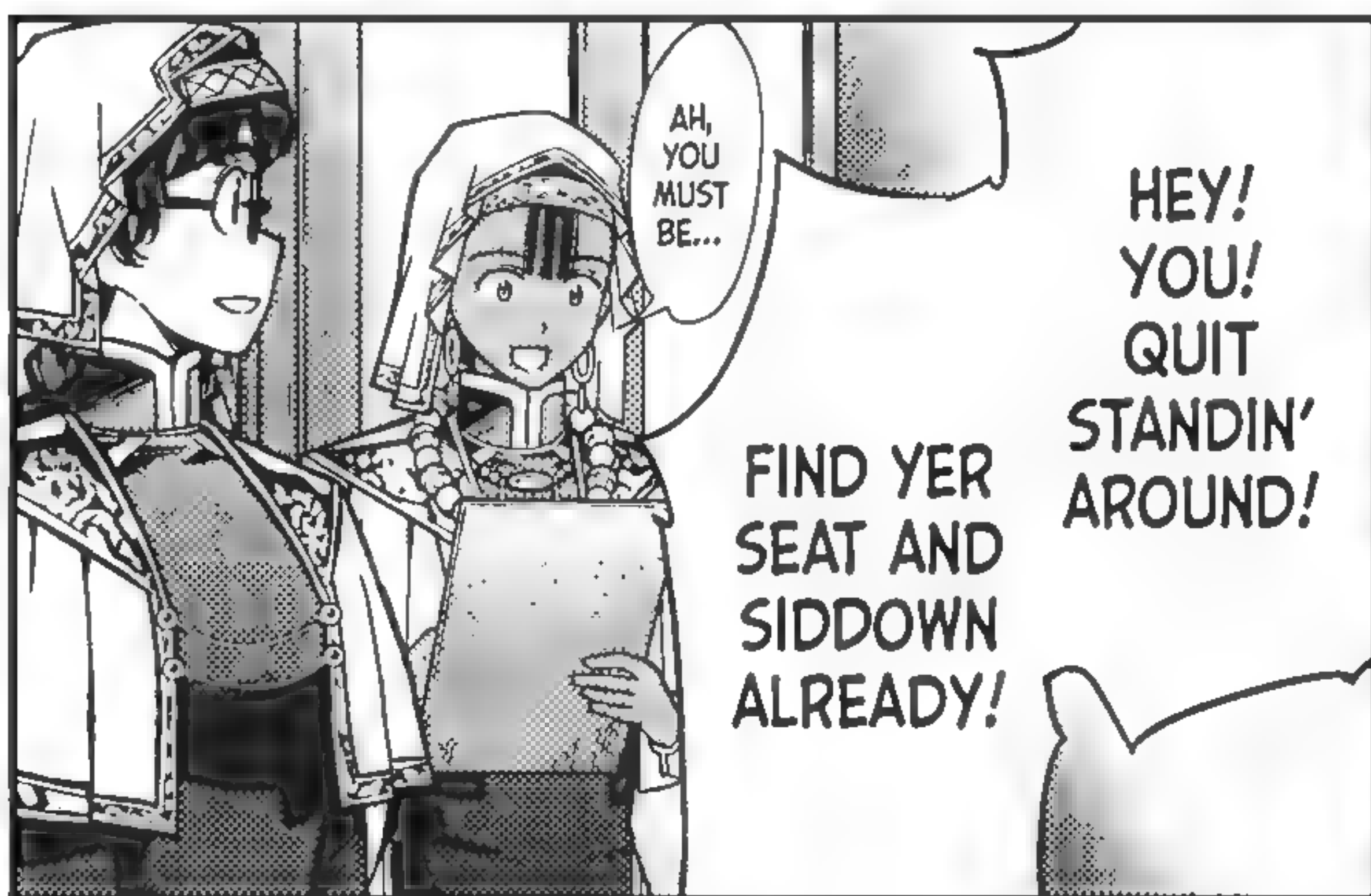
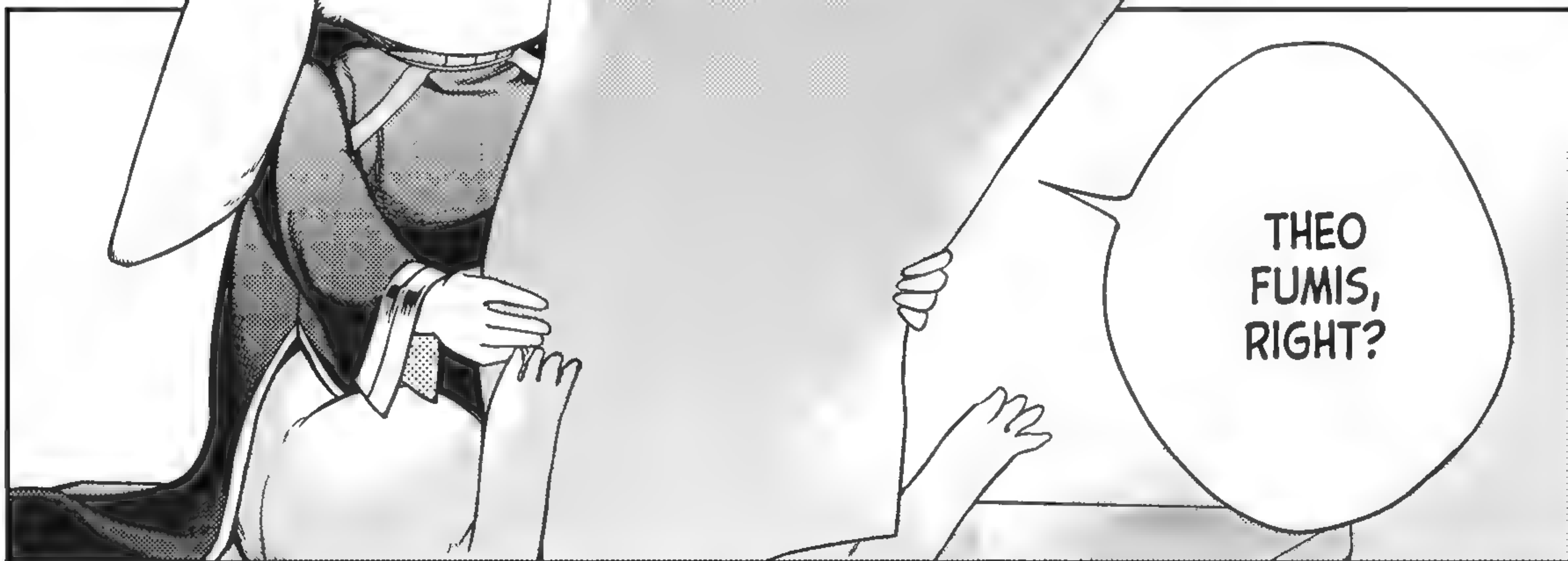
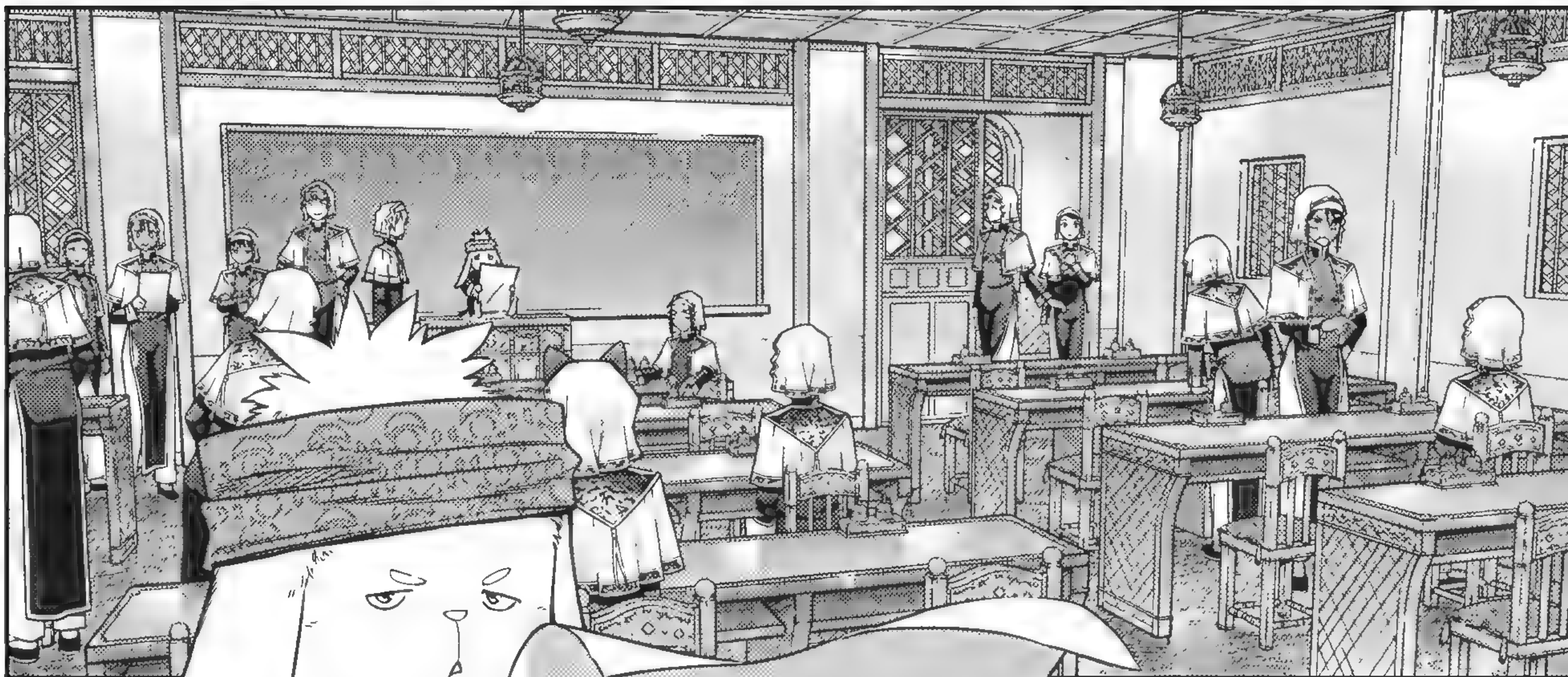
て  
は  
ー

—  
DROOOOL













MY LAST NAME IS FUMIS, TOO. WE MATCH!

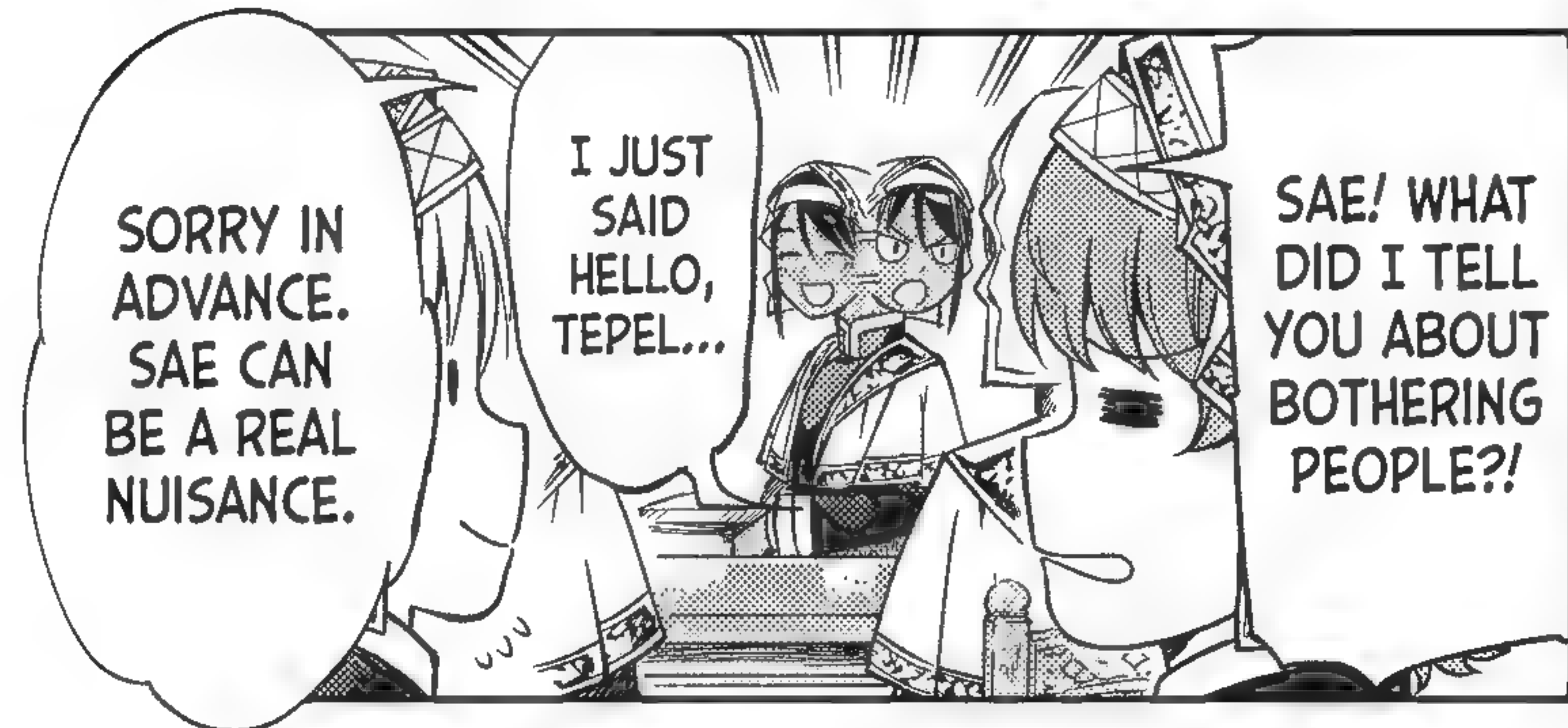
WOW! YOU KNOW WHO I AM ALREADY?

I'M THEO FUMIS. GLAD TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.

YOU MUST BE, UM... SAE, RIGHT?



OH! LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE SEATMATES.



SORRY IN ADVANCE. SAE CAN BE A REAL NUISANCE.

I JUST SAID HELLO, TEPEL...

SAE! WHAT DID I TELL YOU ABOUT BOTHERING PEOPLE?!



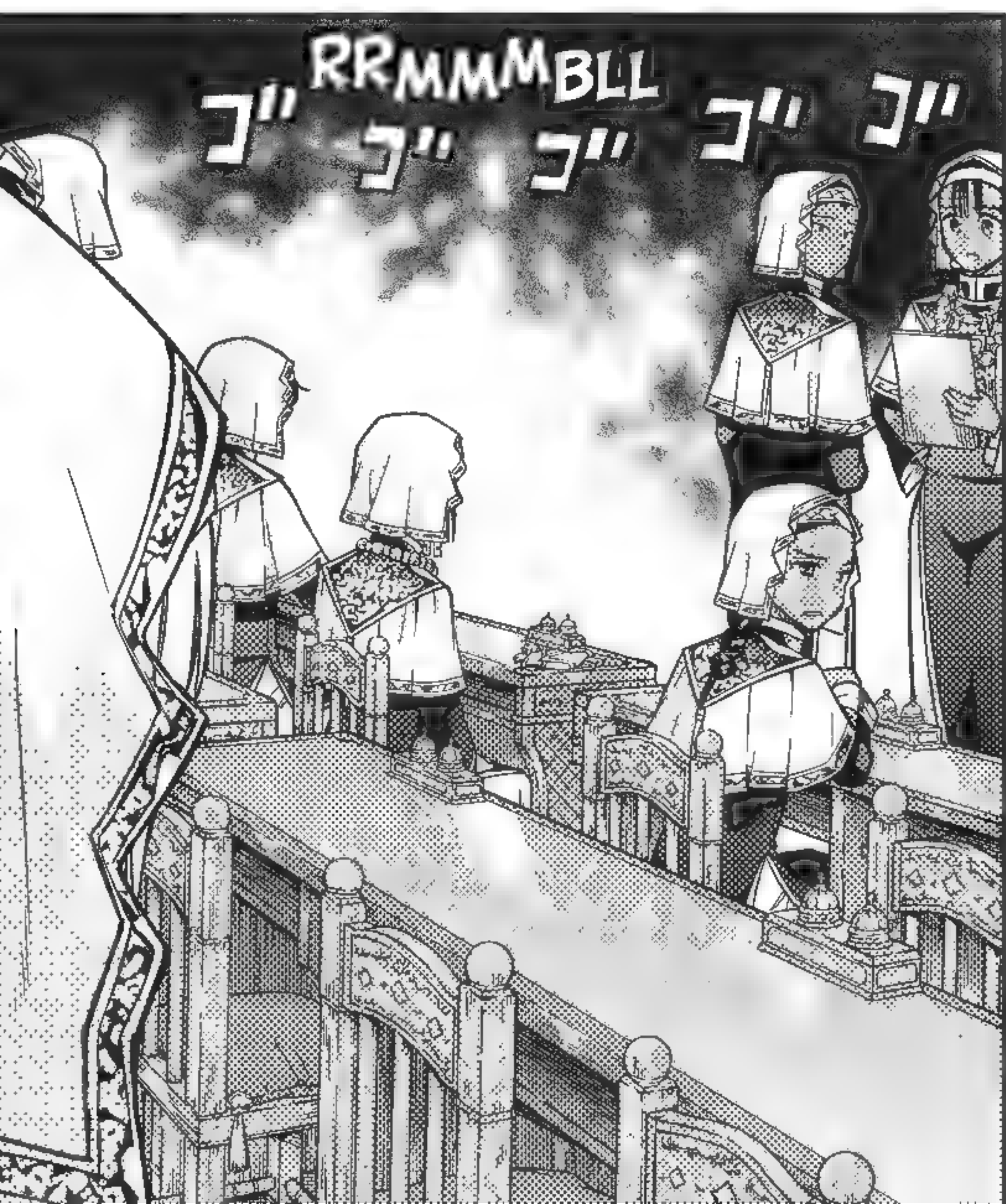
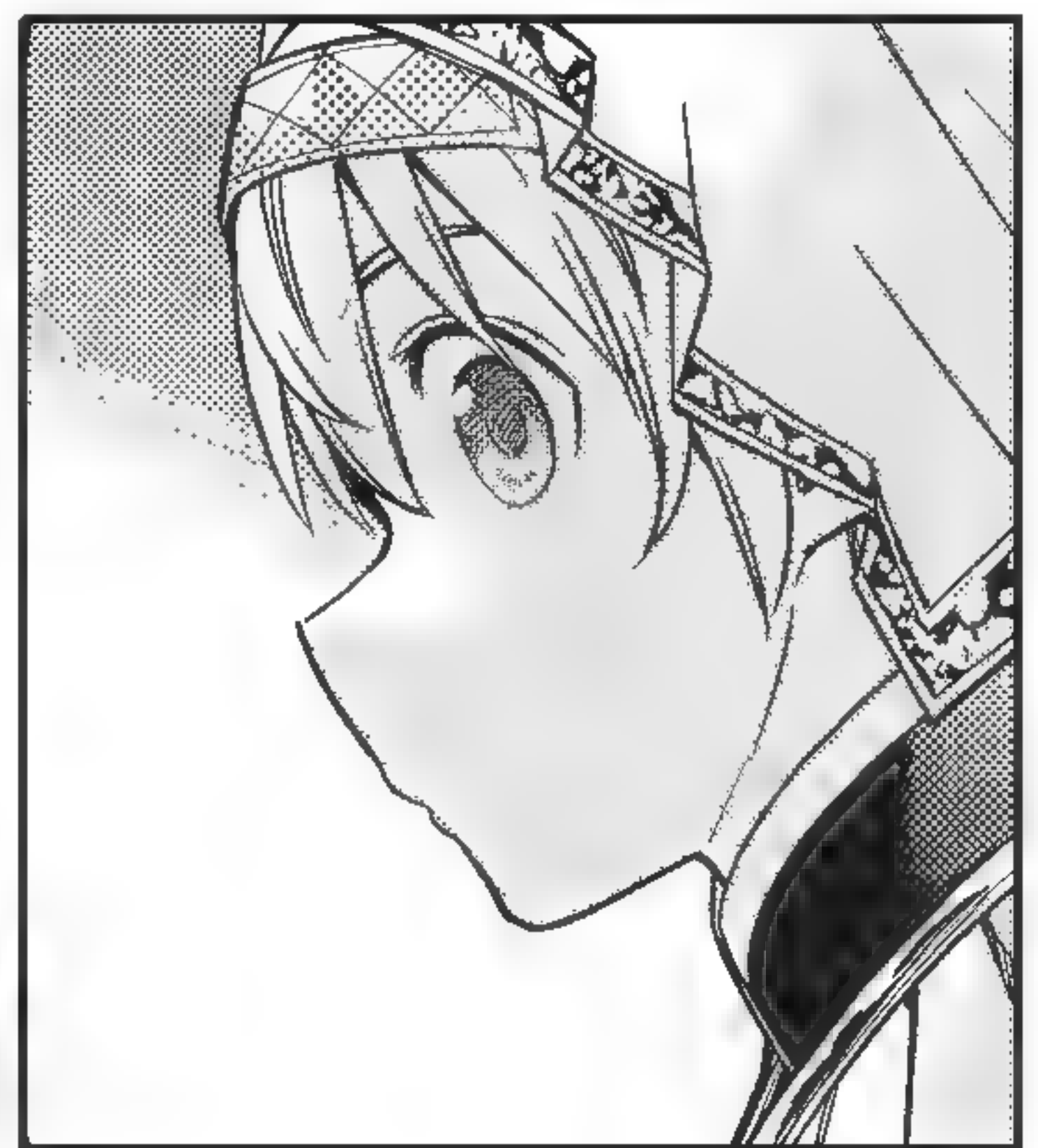
I KNOW THE PEOPLE HERE REPRESENT THE BEST OF THE BEST...

I guess we'll be sitting together!



IT'S KINDA FUNNY...

NOD NOD



RRMMBLL  
ン ン ン ン ン



I KNOW! HOW IRONIC...

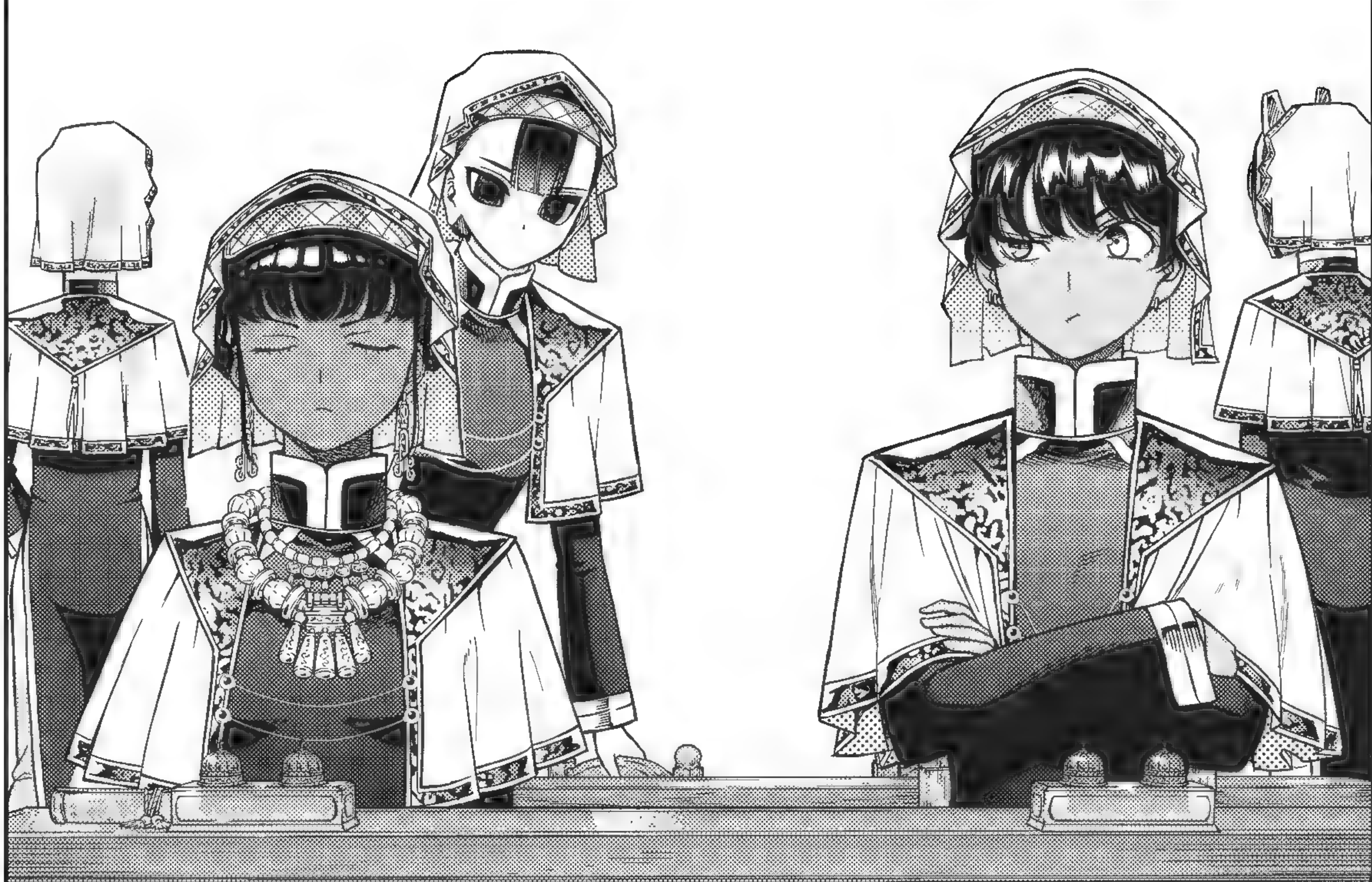
LOOK! I CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE TWO GOT PAIRED OFF.



YAAAWN...

...BUT LOOKING AROUND, YOU MIGHT NEVER GUESS IT.

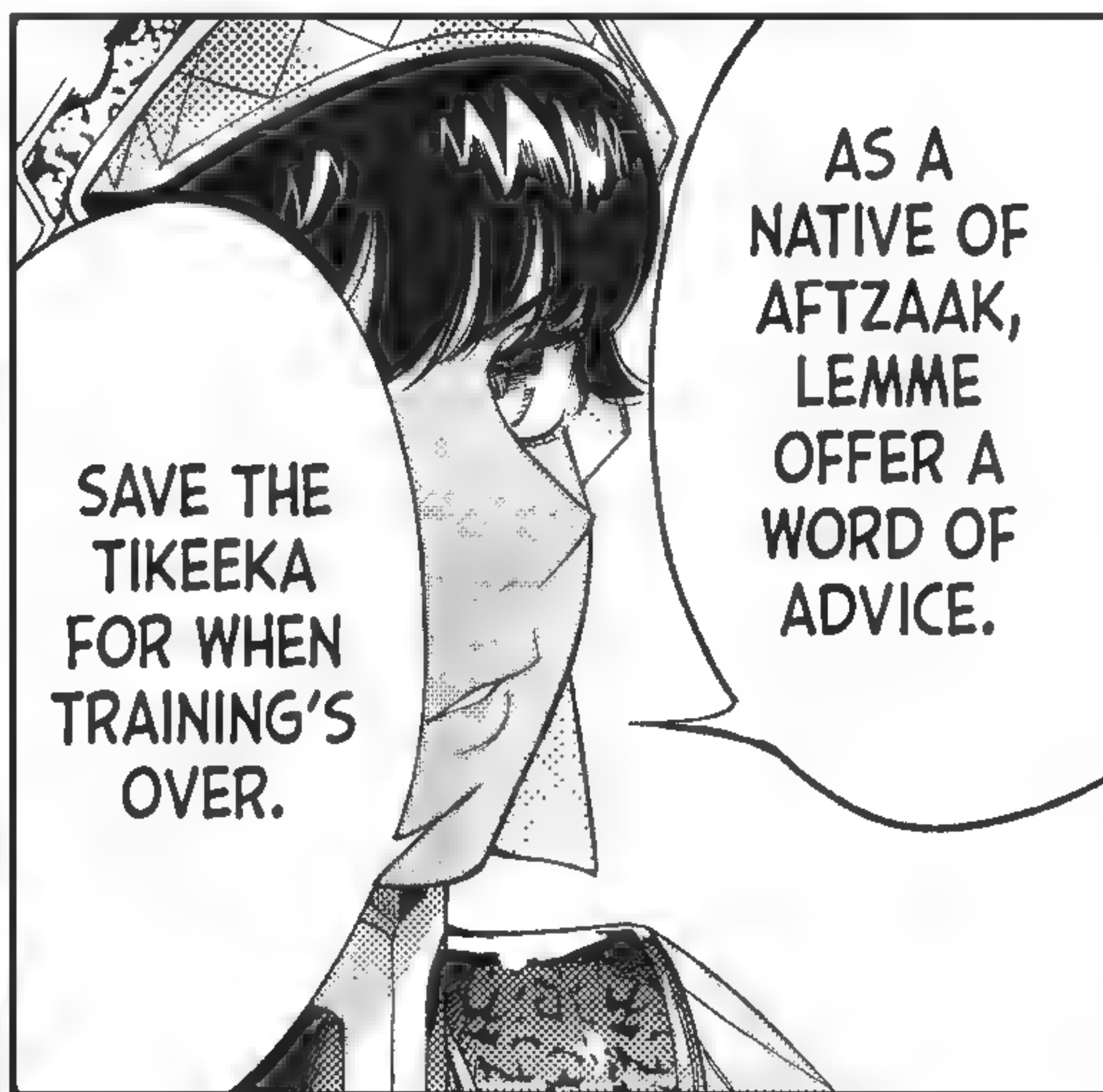




YEAH? WELL  
I'D HIRE A  
NEW EDITOR  
IF I WERE  
YOU.



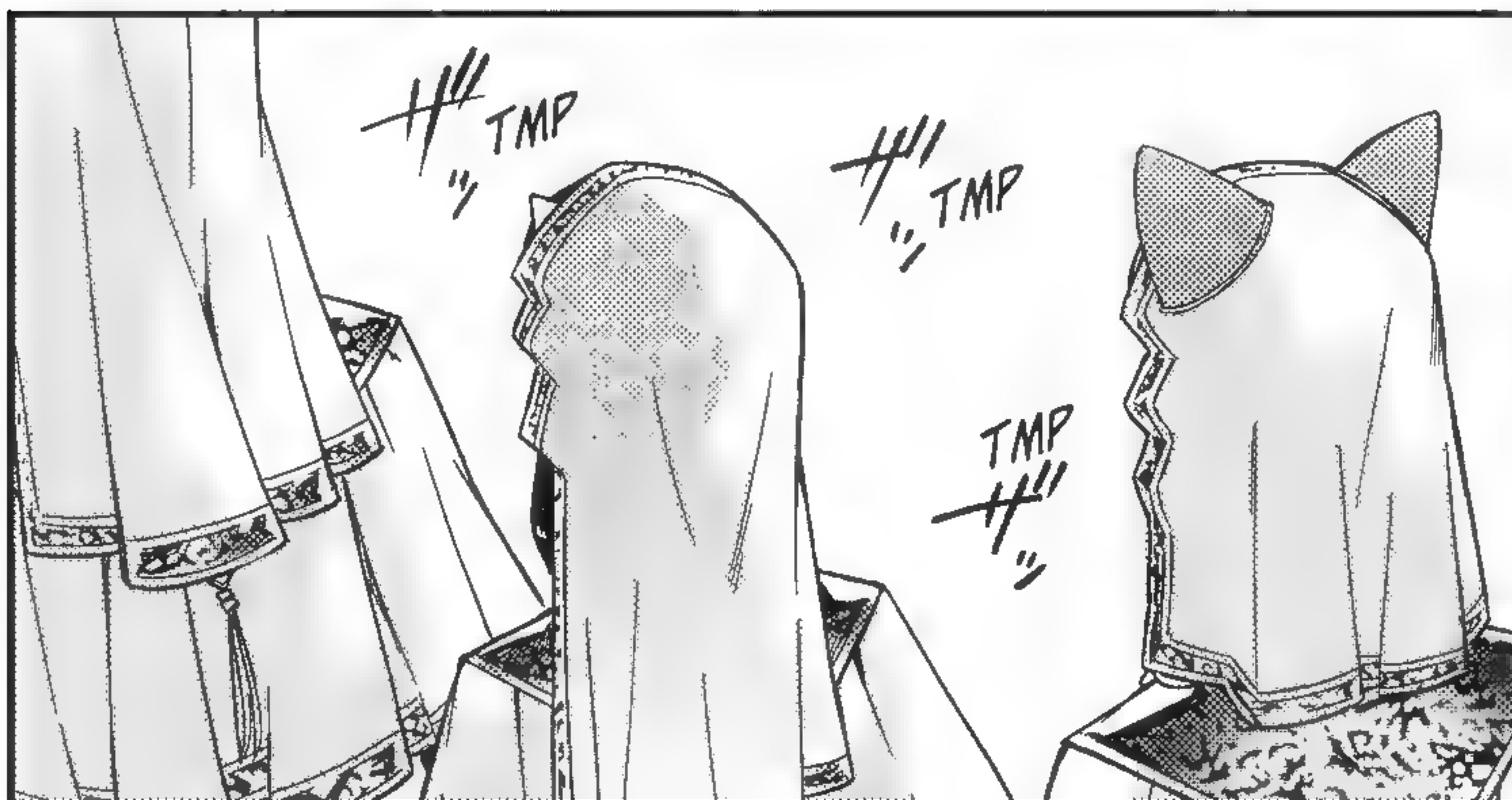
THERE IS NO  
ENTRY FOR  
"HUMILITY" IN  
THE HAHAL'K  
FAMILY DIC-  
TIONARY.



YOUR  
ADVICE IS  
UNNECES-  
SARY.

SAVE THE  
TIKEEKA  
FOR WHEN  
TRAINING'S  
OVER.

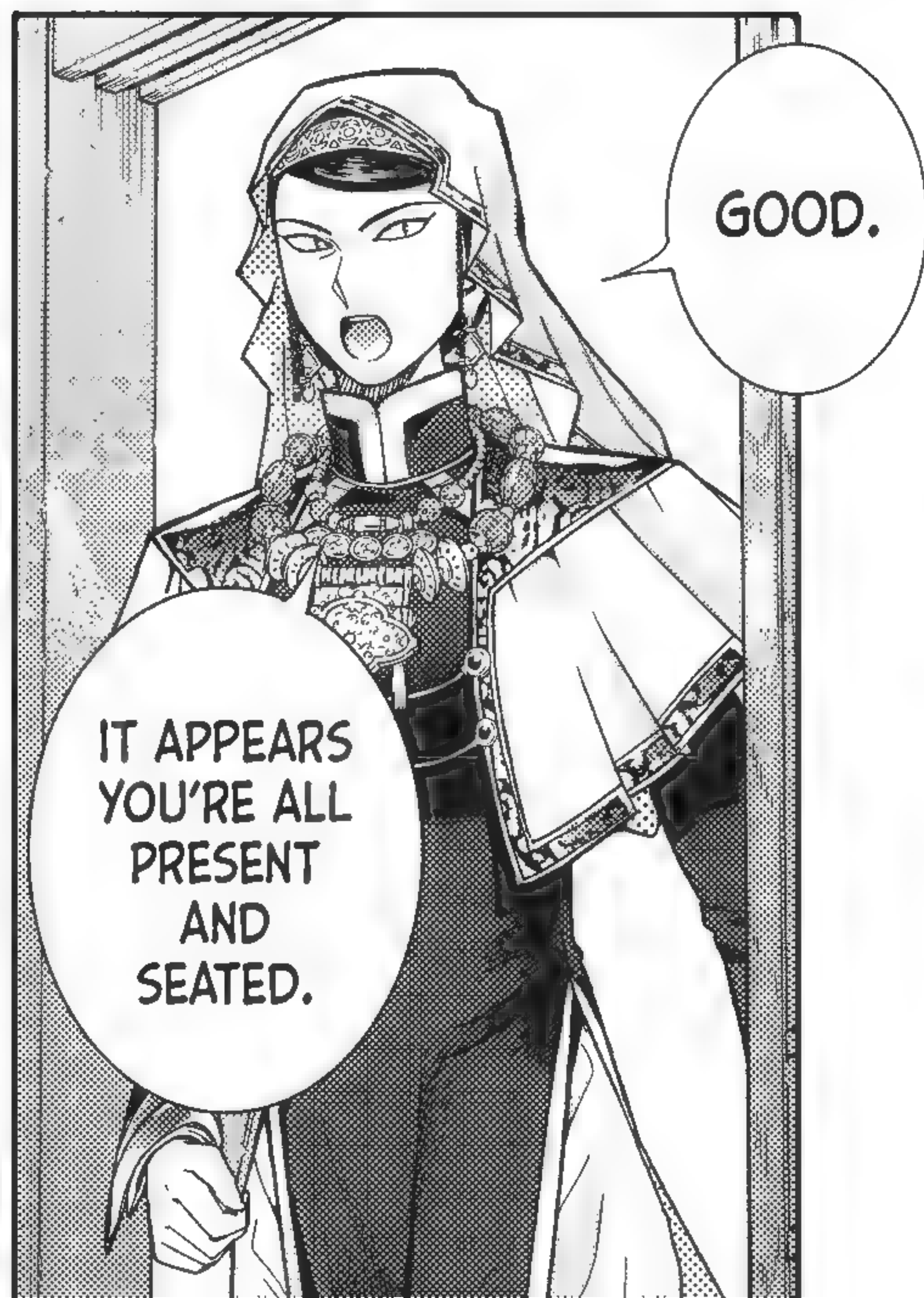
AS A  
NATIVE OF  
AFTZAAK,  
LEMME  
OFFER A  
WORD OF  
ADVICE.



/// TMP  
///

/// TMP  
///

TMP  
///  
///



GOOD.

IT APPEARS  
YOU'RE ALL  
PRESENT  
AND  
SEATED.





EYES  
UP HERE,  
PLEASE!

THUMP

AS ASSISTANT  
SUPERVISORS  
ASSIGNED TO THE  
86TH INCOMING  
CLASS OF  
TRAINEES, WE'D  
LIKE TO EXTEND  
OUR WELCOME.

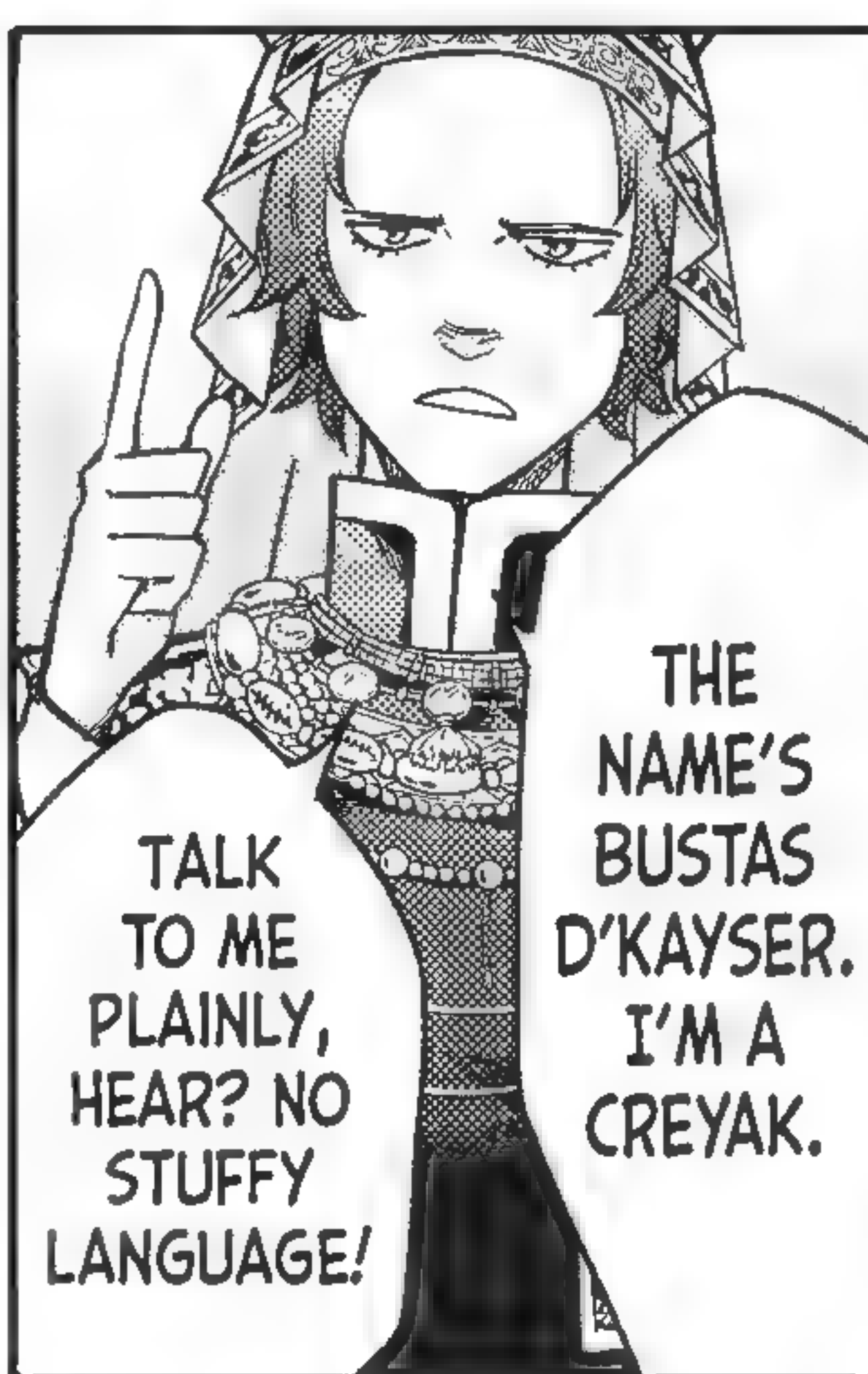
...AS WE  
HELP YOU ON  
YOUR JOURNEY  
TO BECOMING  
UPSTANDING YOUNG  
KAFNA. ALL 27 OF  
YOU-ONE OF WHOM  
IS YET TO JOIN US,  
DUE TO SPECIAL  
CIRCUMSTANCES.

FOR THE  
NEXT YEAR,  
YOU WILL  
REMAIN IN THE  
CARE OF THE  
PERSONNEL  
OFFICE...



DESPITE  
THE LACK  
OF A MASK,  
I AM,  
IN FACT,  
KADOE.

I AM  
REI  
ANA  
EDAN.



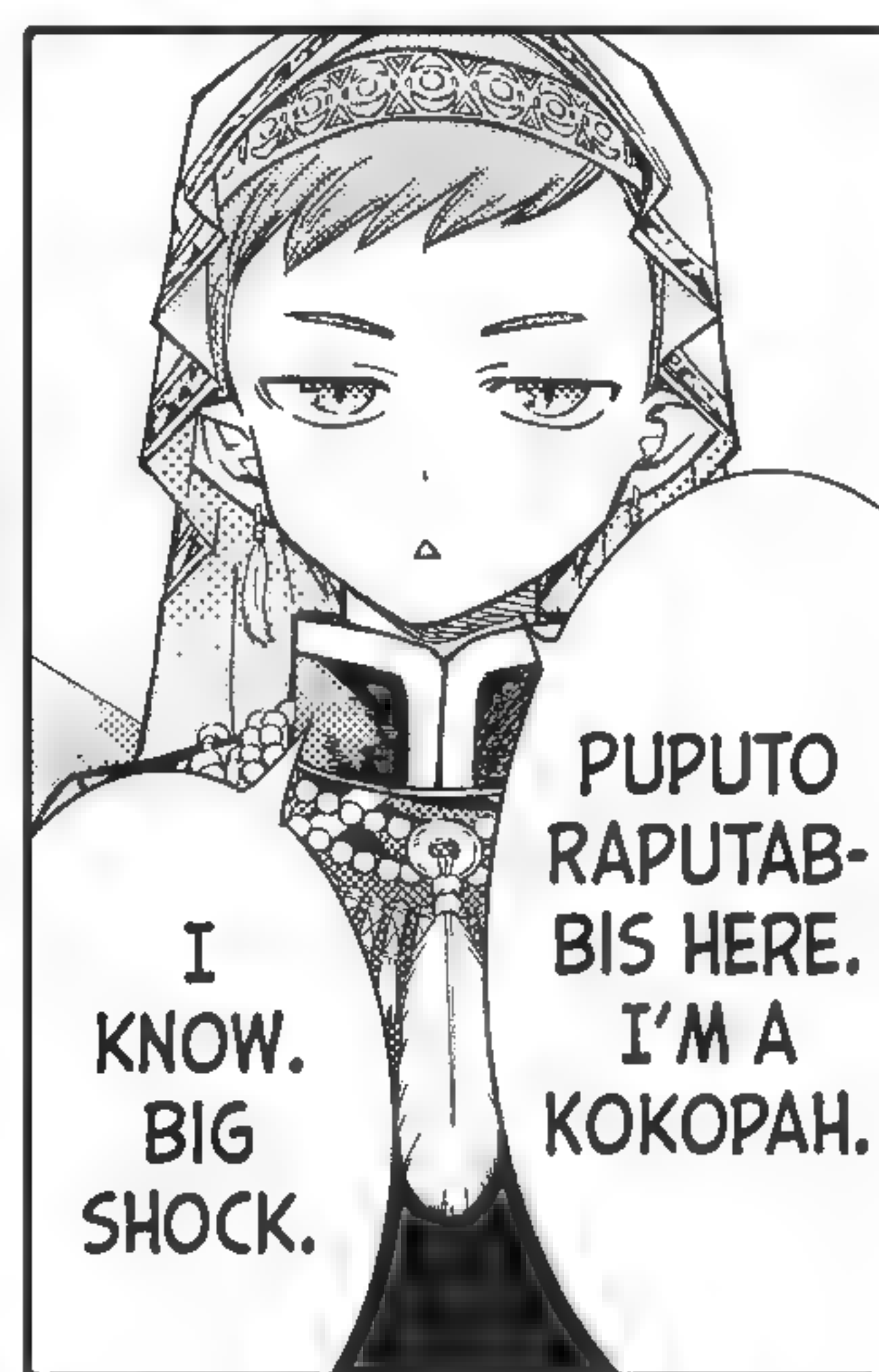
TALK  
TO ME  
PLAINLY,  
HEAR? NO  
STUFFY  
LANGUAGE!

THE  
NAME'S  
BUSTAS  
D'KAYSER.  
I'M A  
CREYAK.



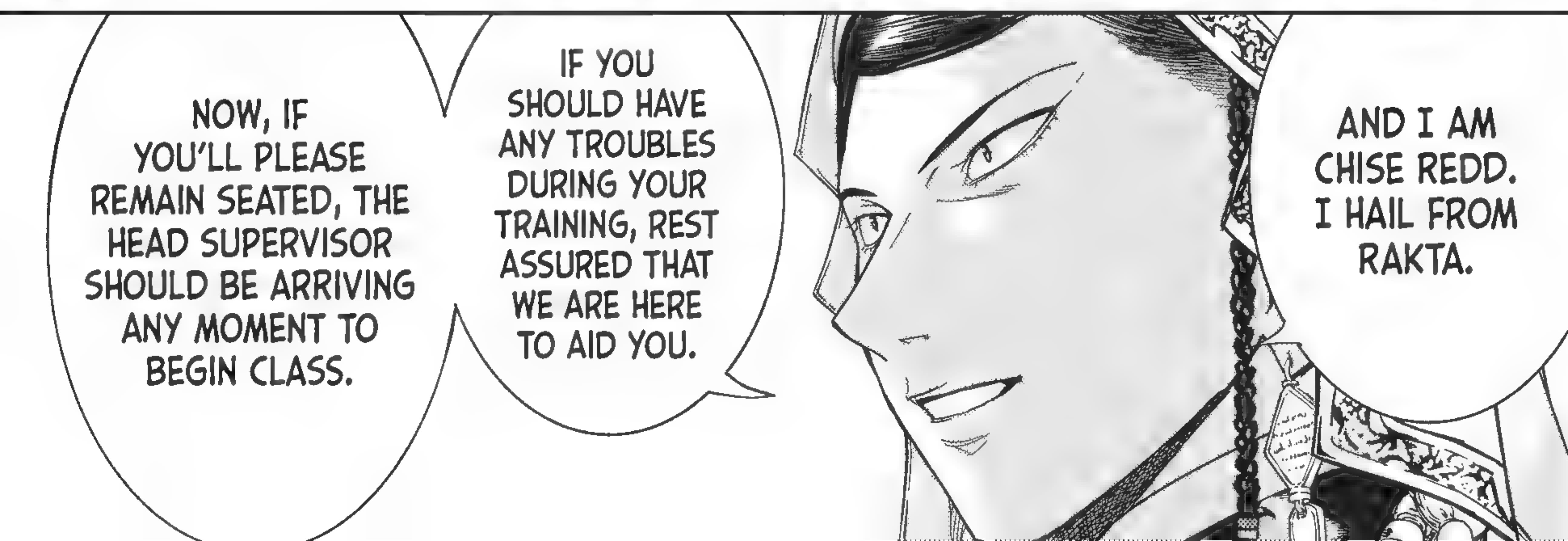
...NOT  
MUCH  
OLDER  
THAN  
MOST  
OF  
YOU.

HI!  
I'M AIKO  
JORAMIS,  
A HYRON.  
I'M ACTU-  
ALLY...



I  
KNOW.  
BIG  
SHOCK.

PUPUTO  
RAPUTAB-  
BIS HERE.  
I'M A  
KOKOPAH.

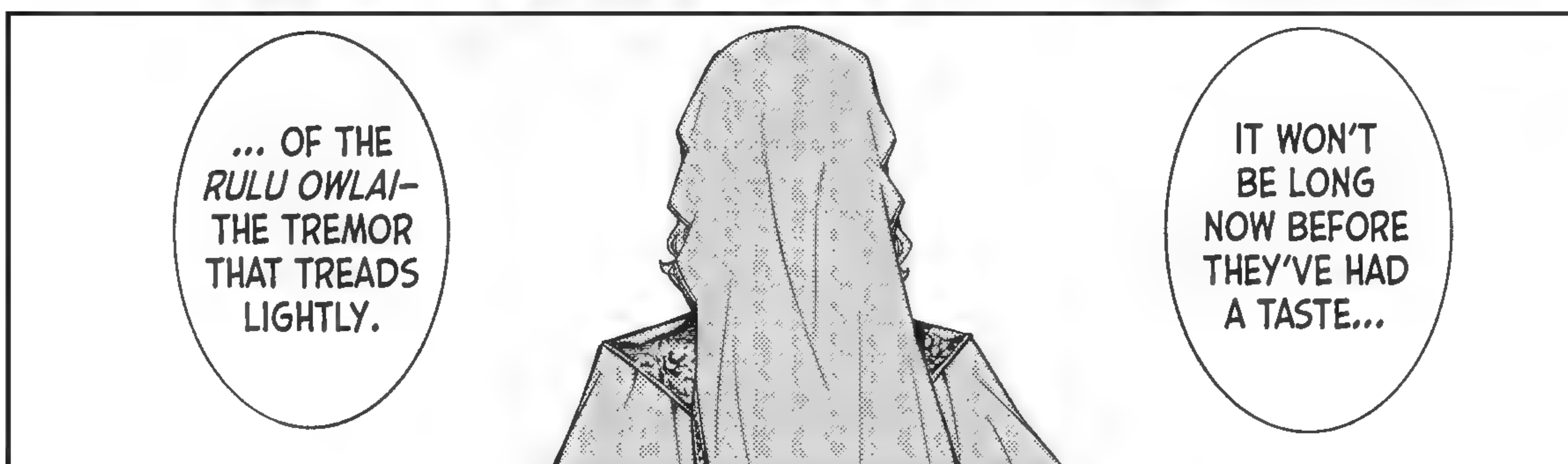
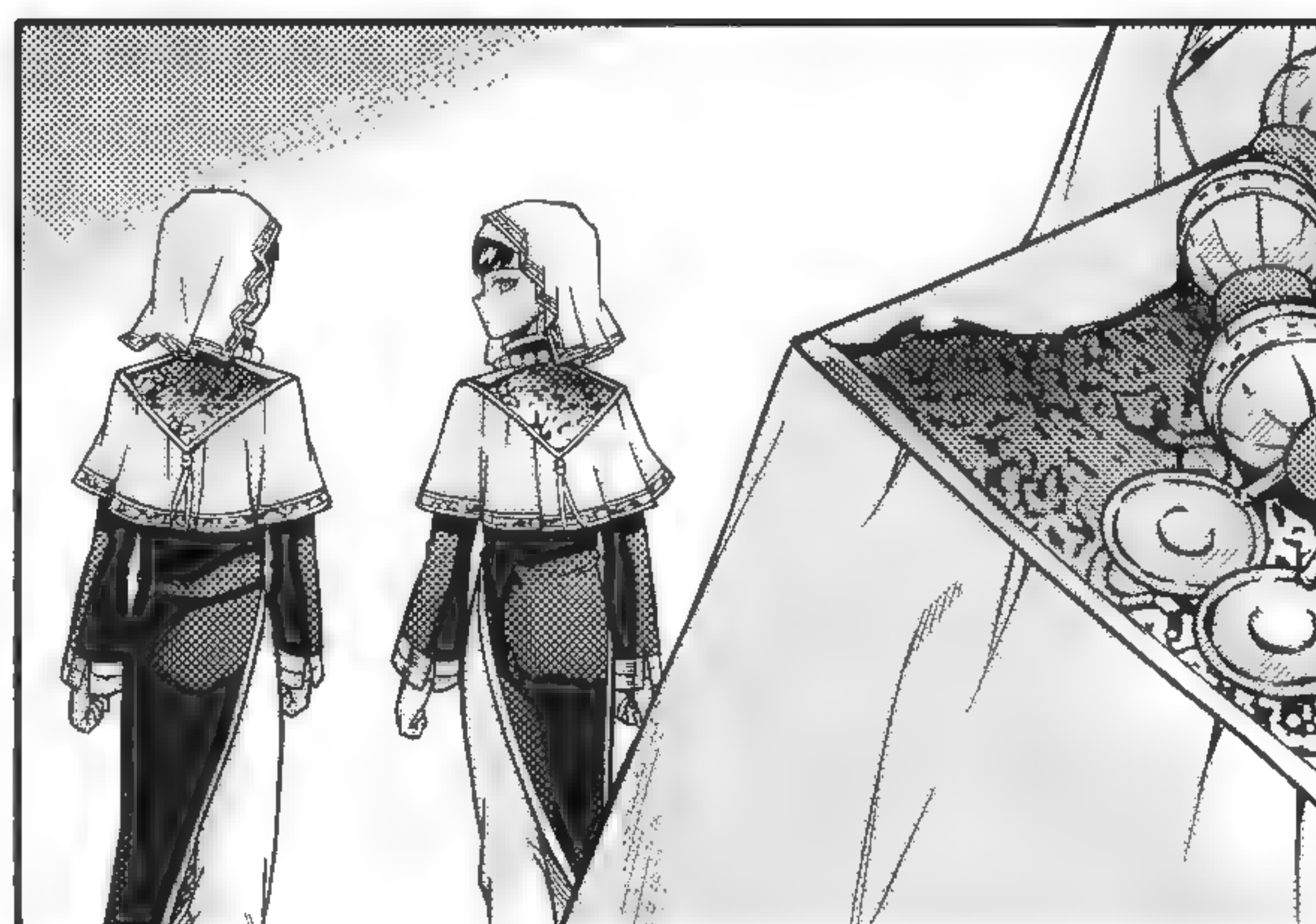
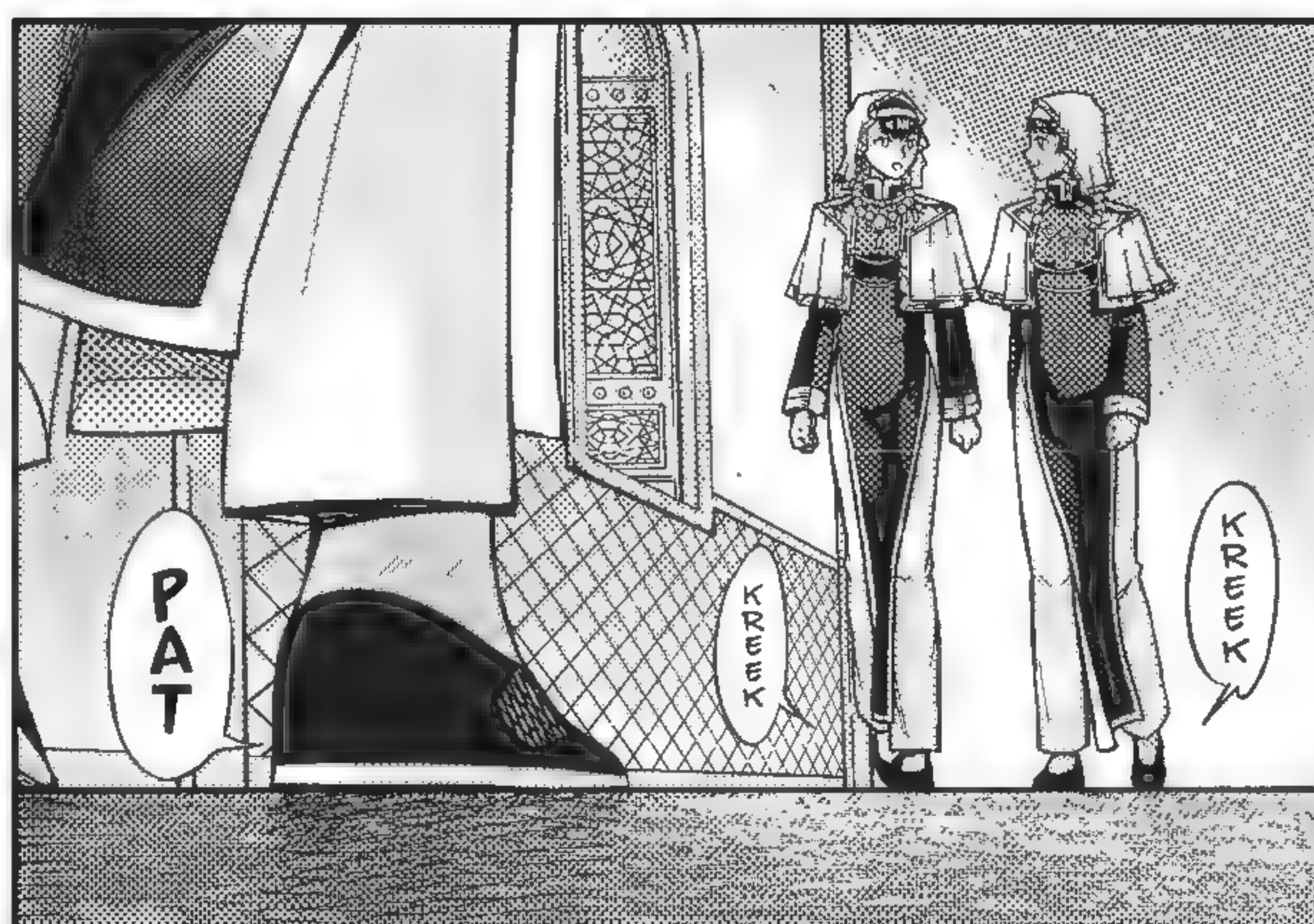


NOW, IF  
YOU'LL PLEASE  
REMAIN SEATED, THE  
HEAD SUPERVISOR  
SHOULD BE ARRIVING  
ANY MOMENT TO  
BEGIN CLASS.

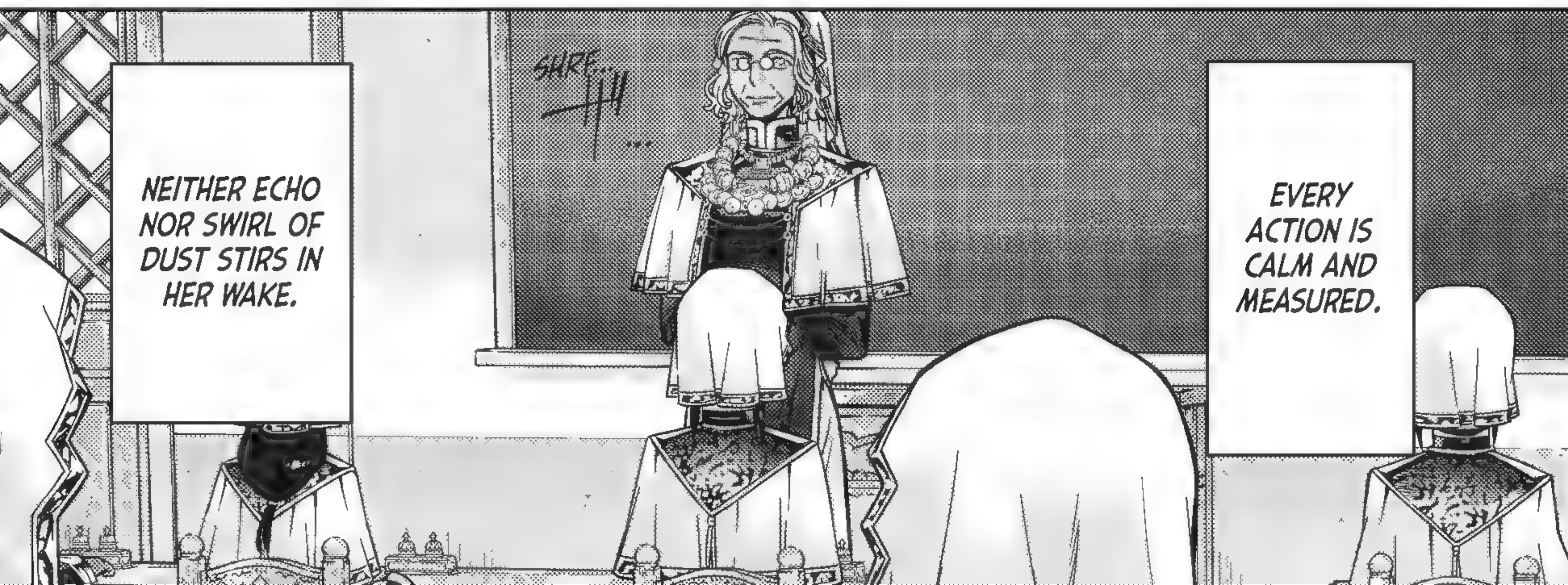
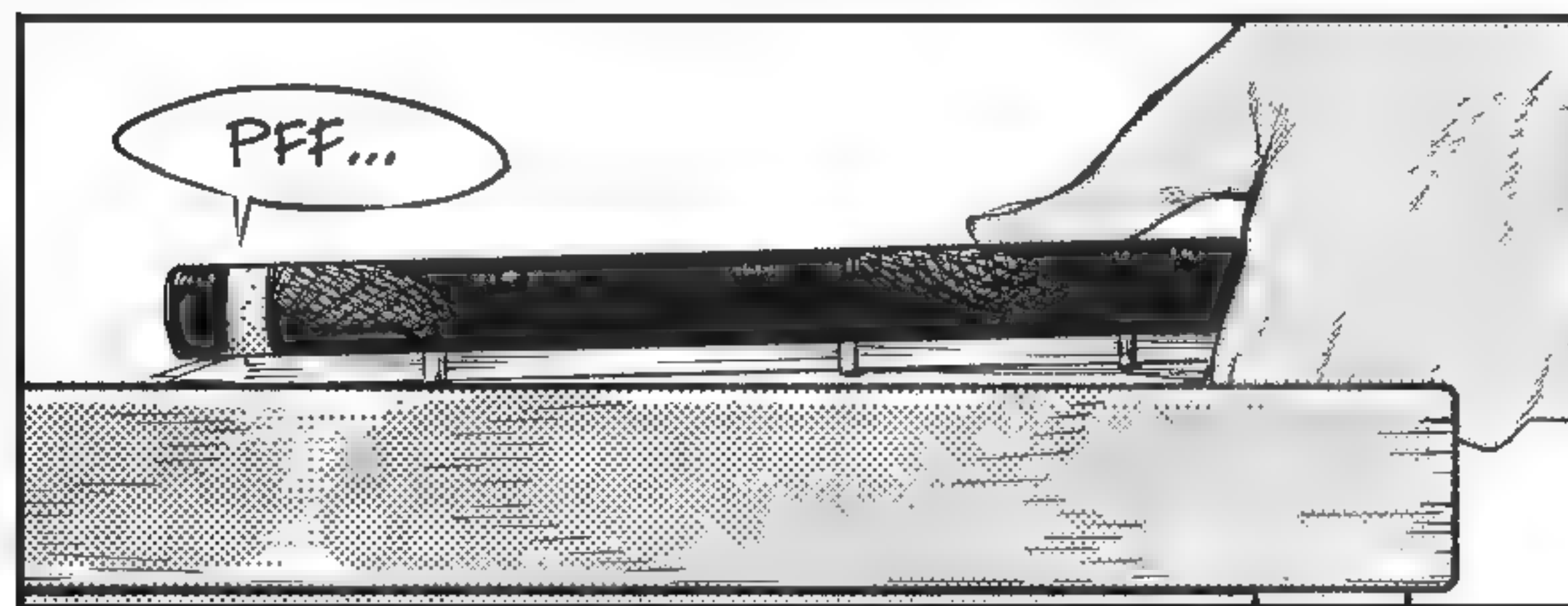
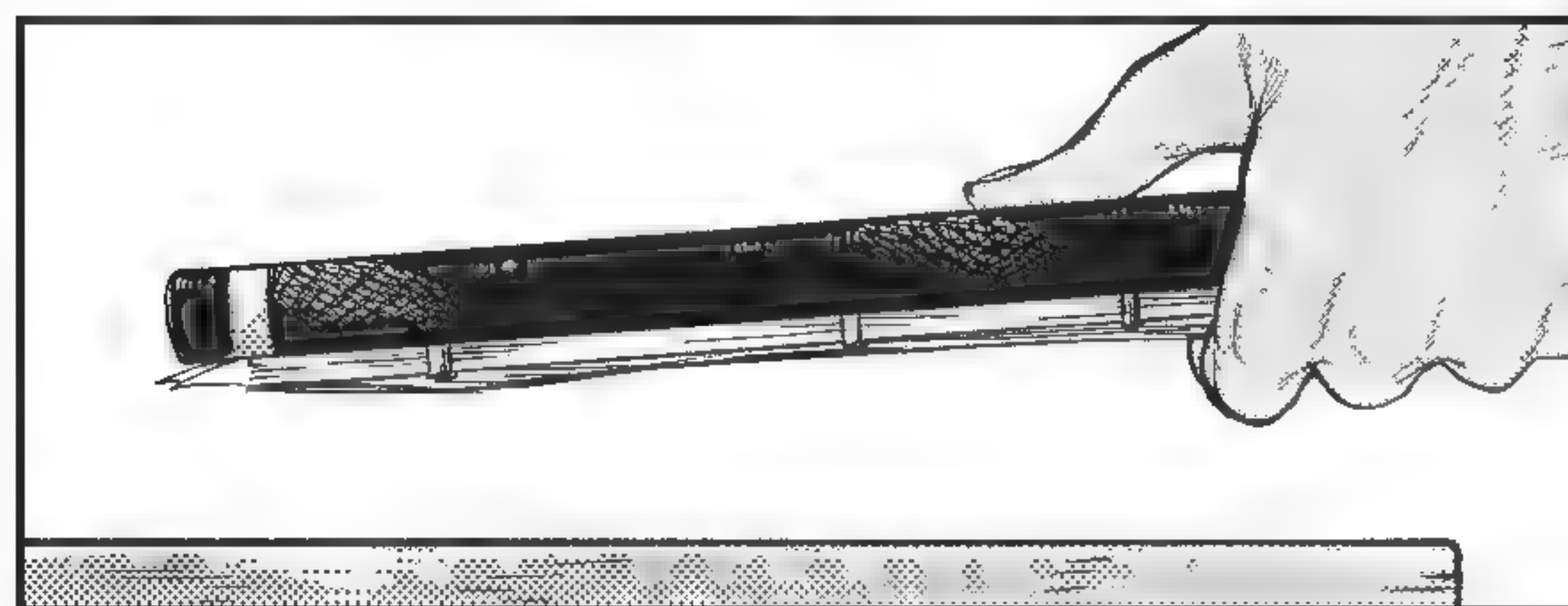
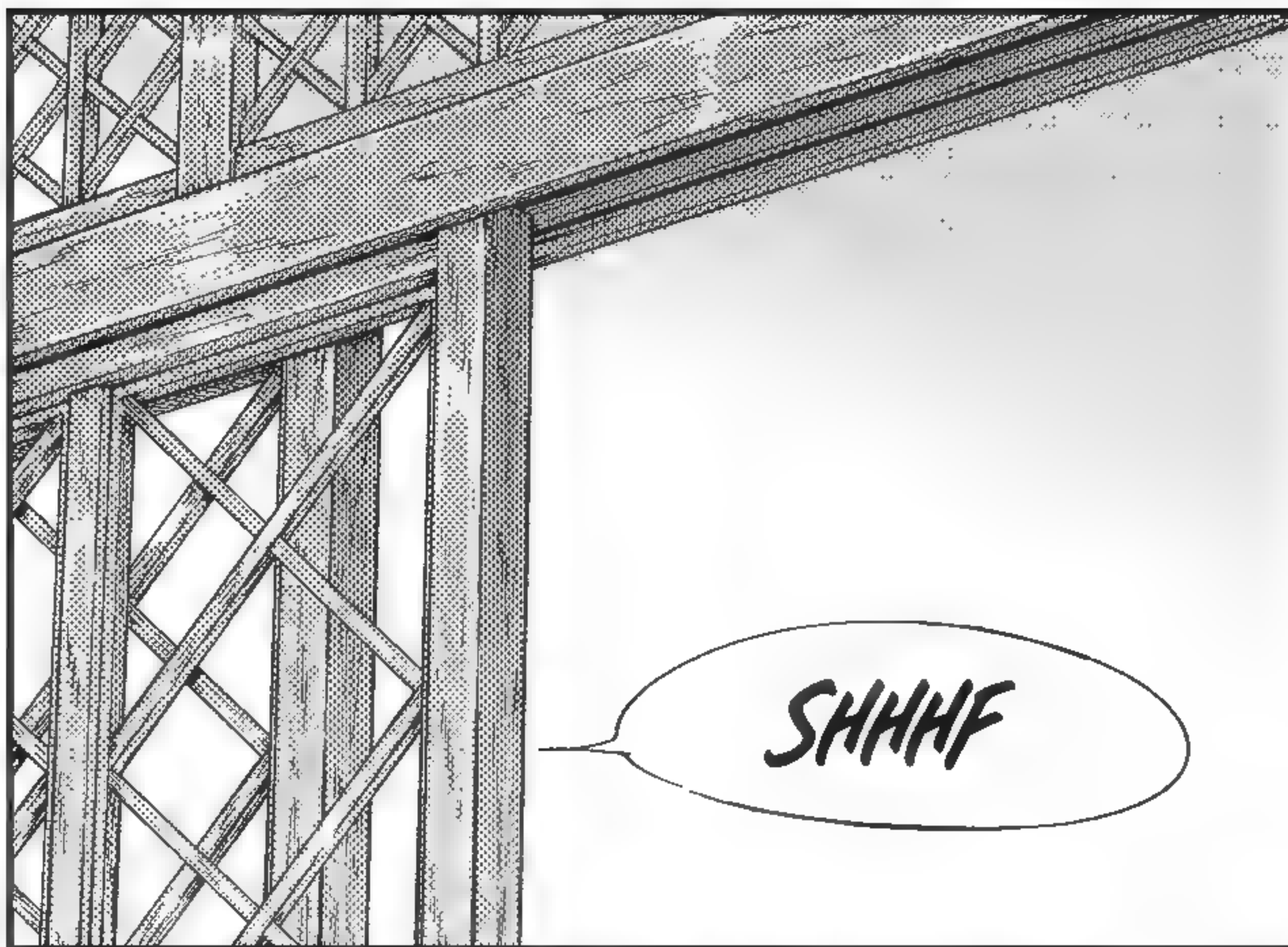
IF YOU  
SHOULD HAVE  
ANY TROUBLES  
DURING YOUR  
TRAINING, REST  
ASSURED THAT  
WE ARE HERE  
TO AID YOU.

AND I AM  
CHISE REDD.  
I HAIL FROM  
RAKTA.













I AM XTOH  
SEROS OF  
THE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY  
PERSONNEL  
OFFICE.

I WILL BE  
IN CHARGE OF  
YOUR TRAINING  
FOR THE  
DURATION  
OF THIS  
YEAR.



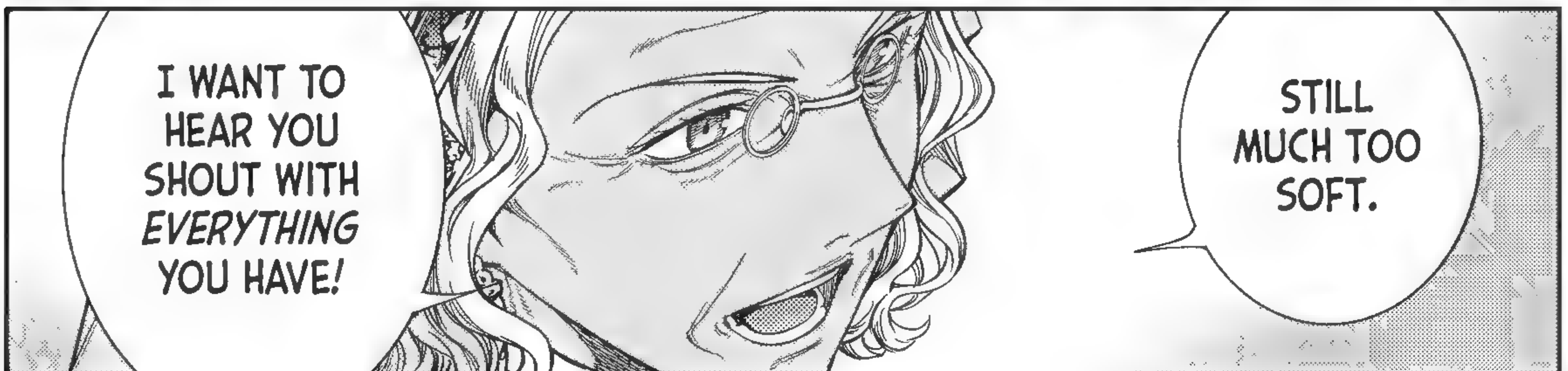
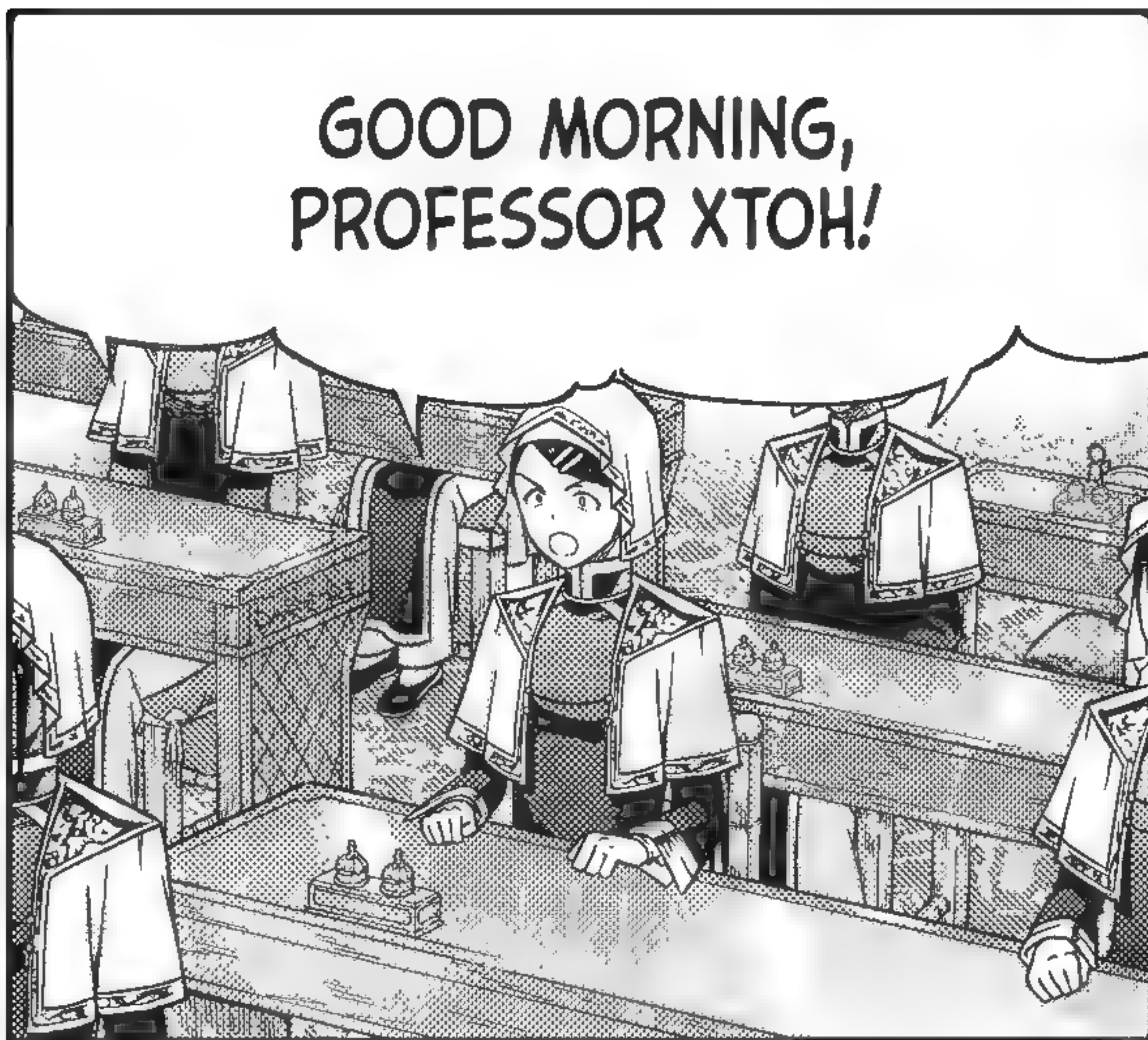
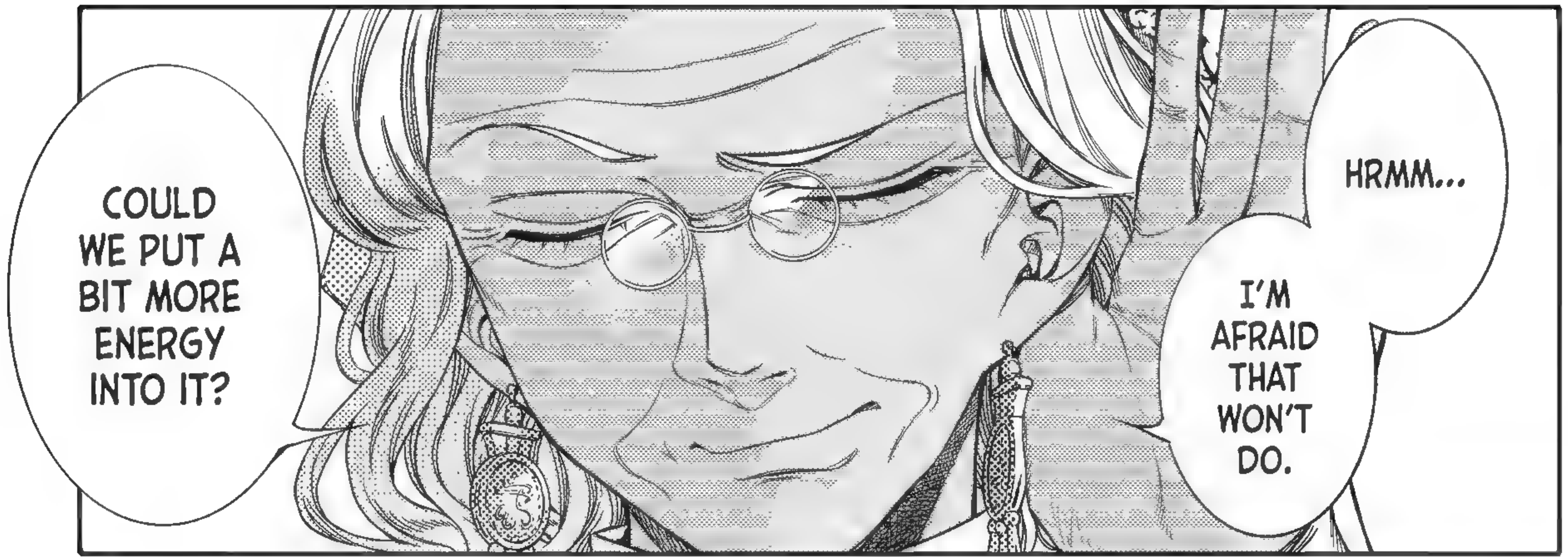
GOOD  
MORNING,  
PROFESSOR  
XTOH!



GOOD  
MORNING,  
CLASS.

I'D LIKE TO  
BEGIN WITH  
A GREETING.  
SHOW SOME  
ENTHUSIASM,  
PLEASE.



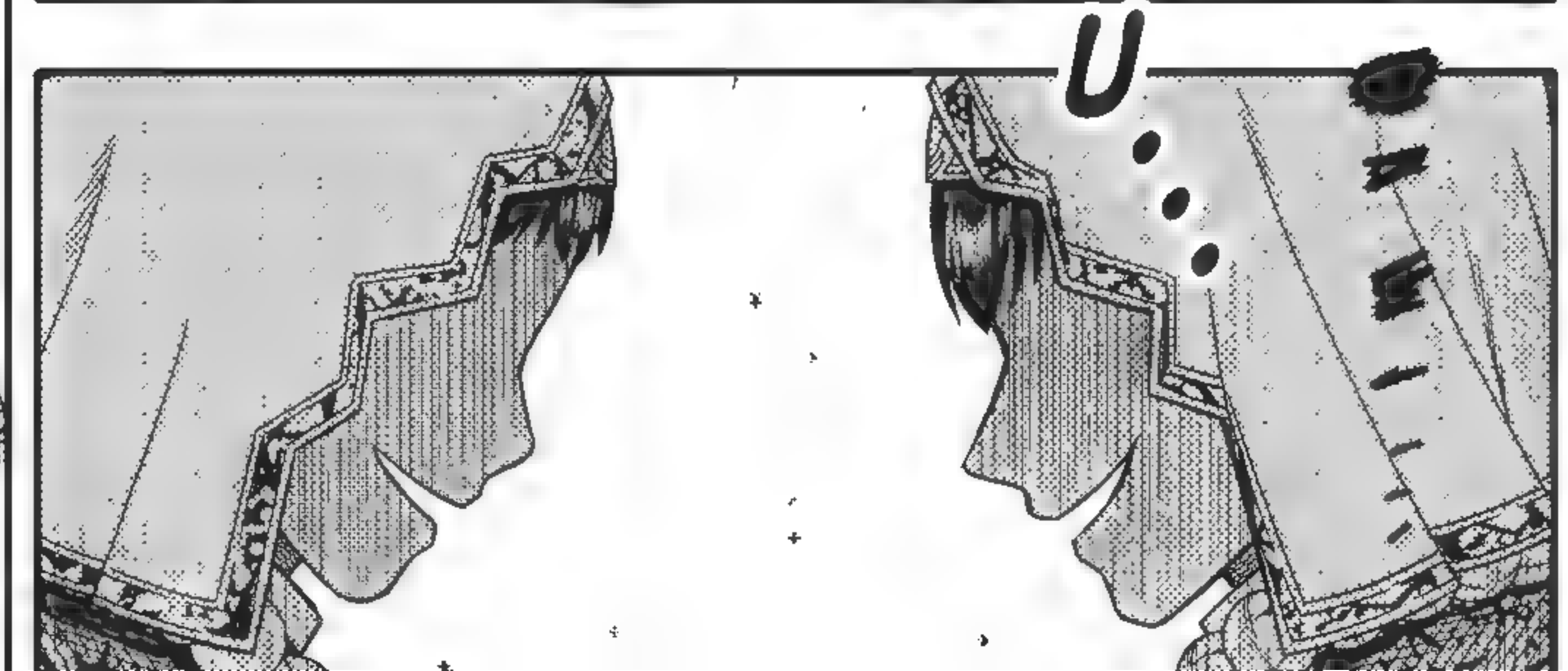
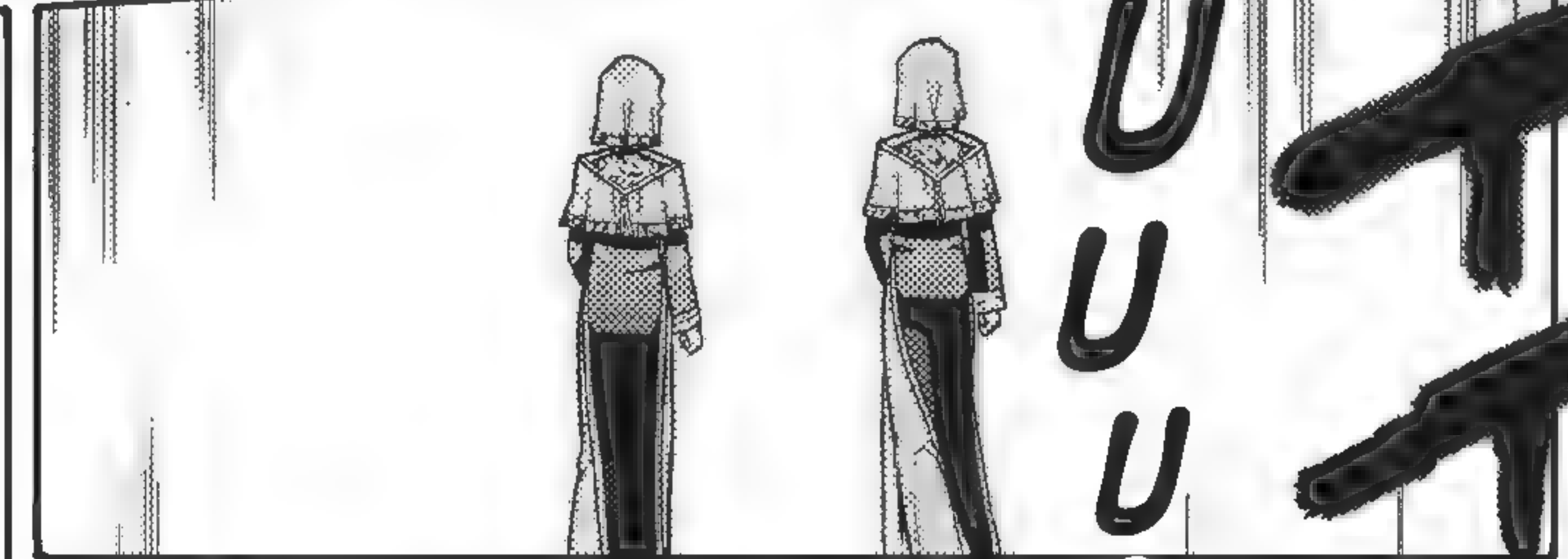
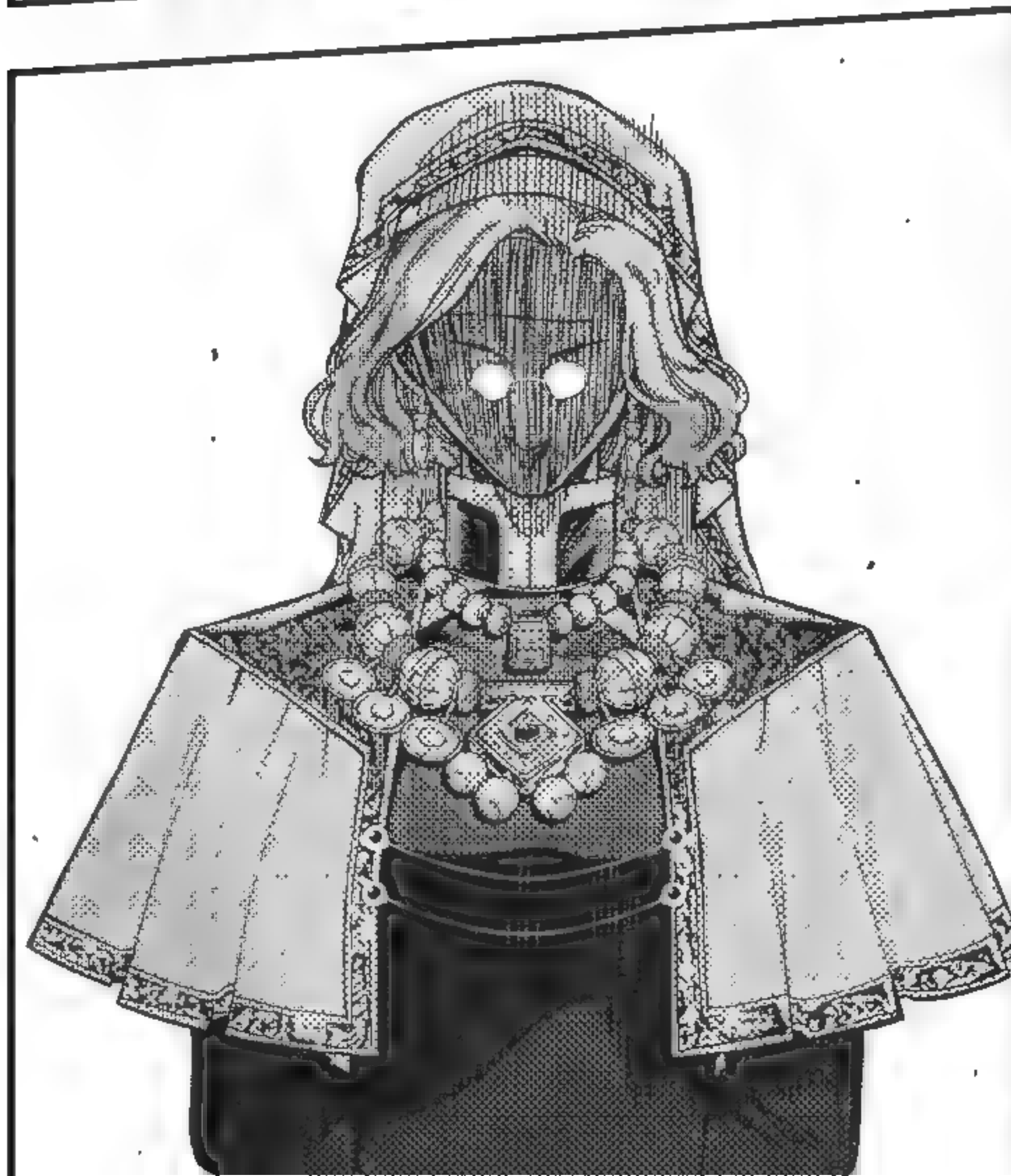
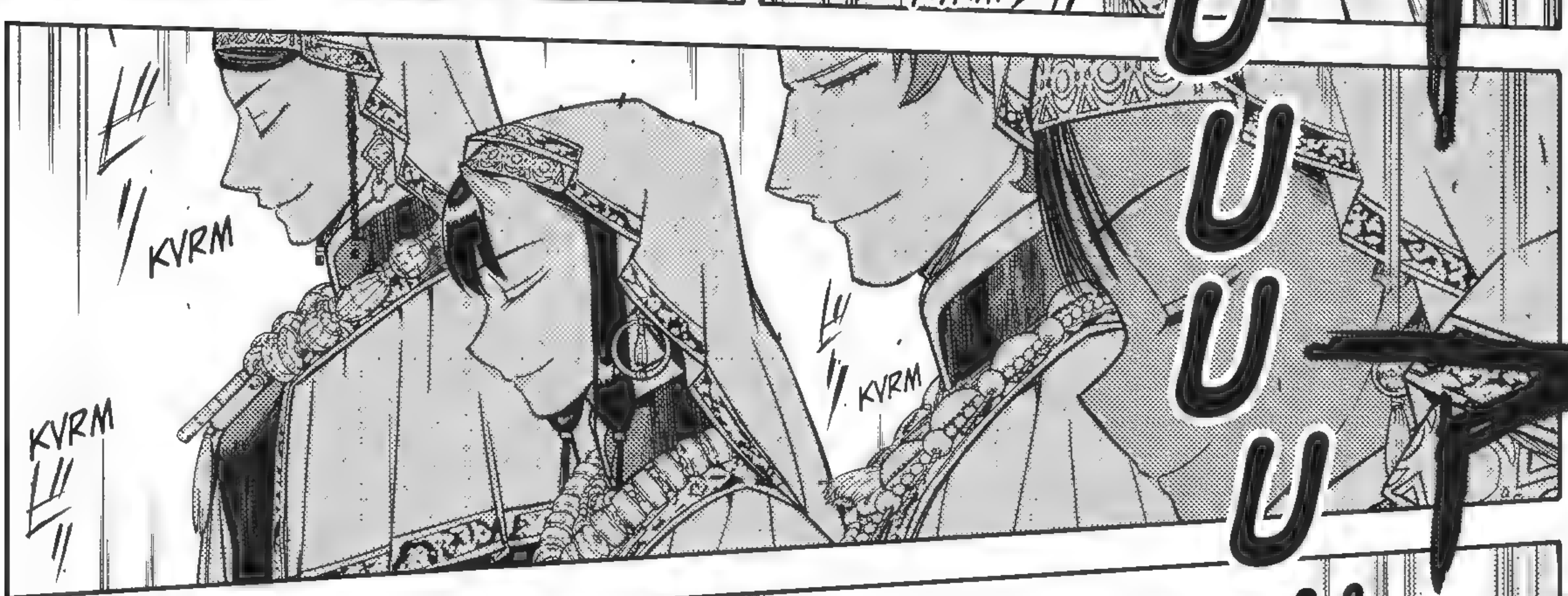




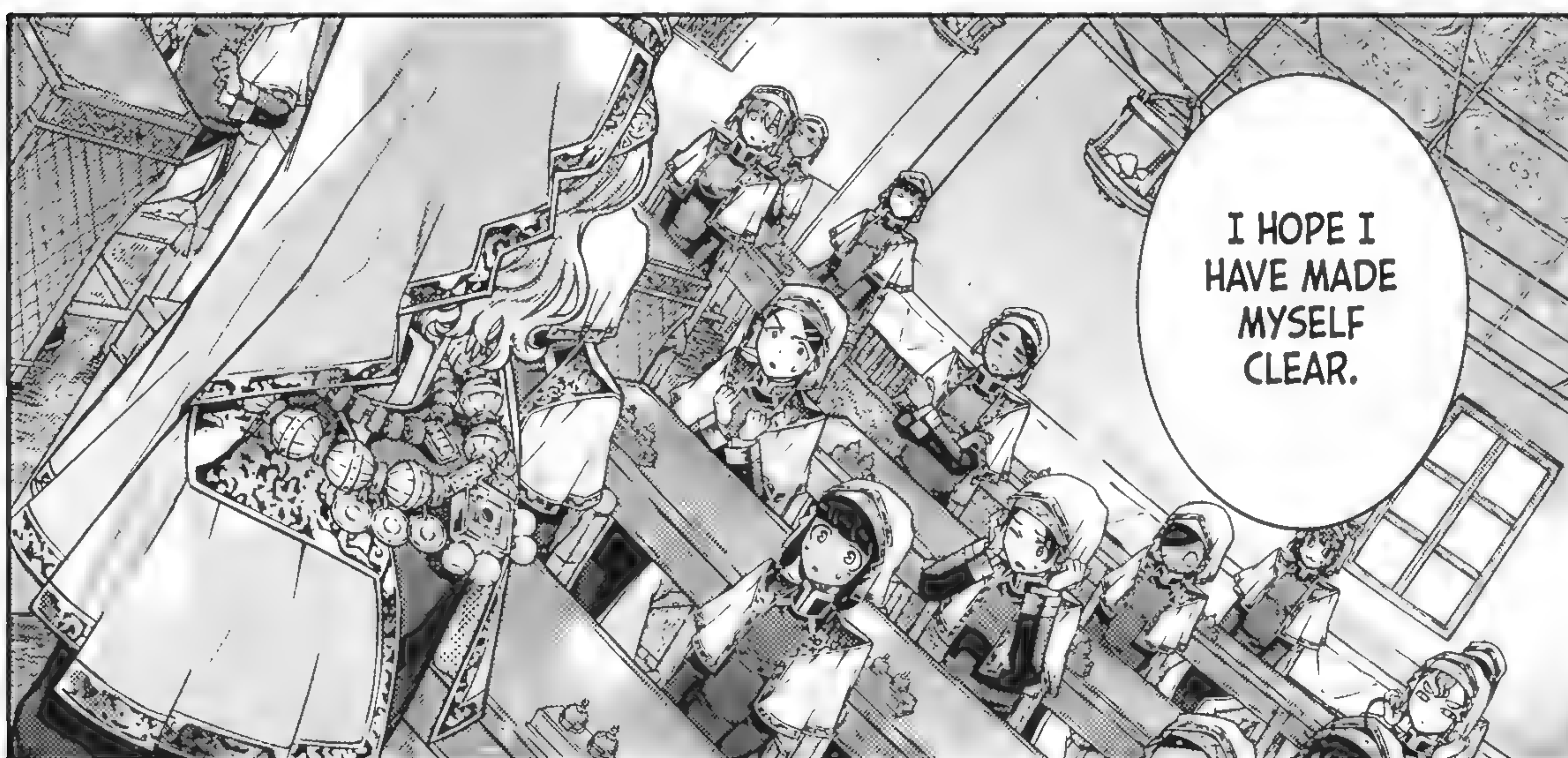
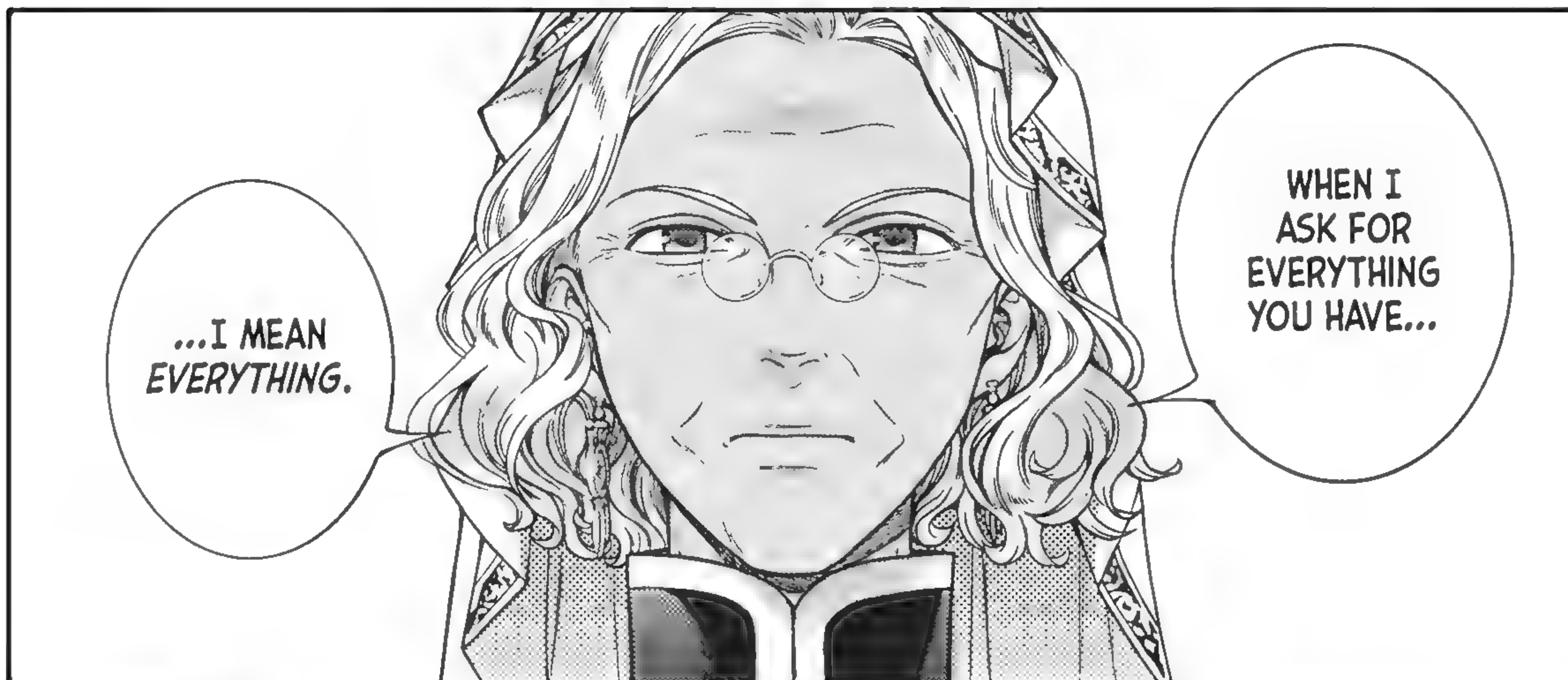
I CAN'T HEAR YOU!!!















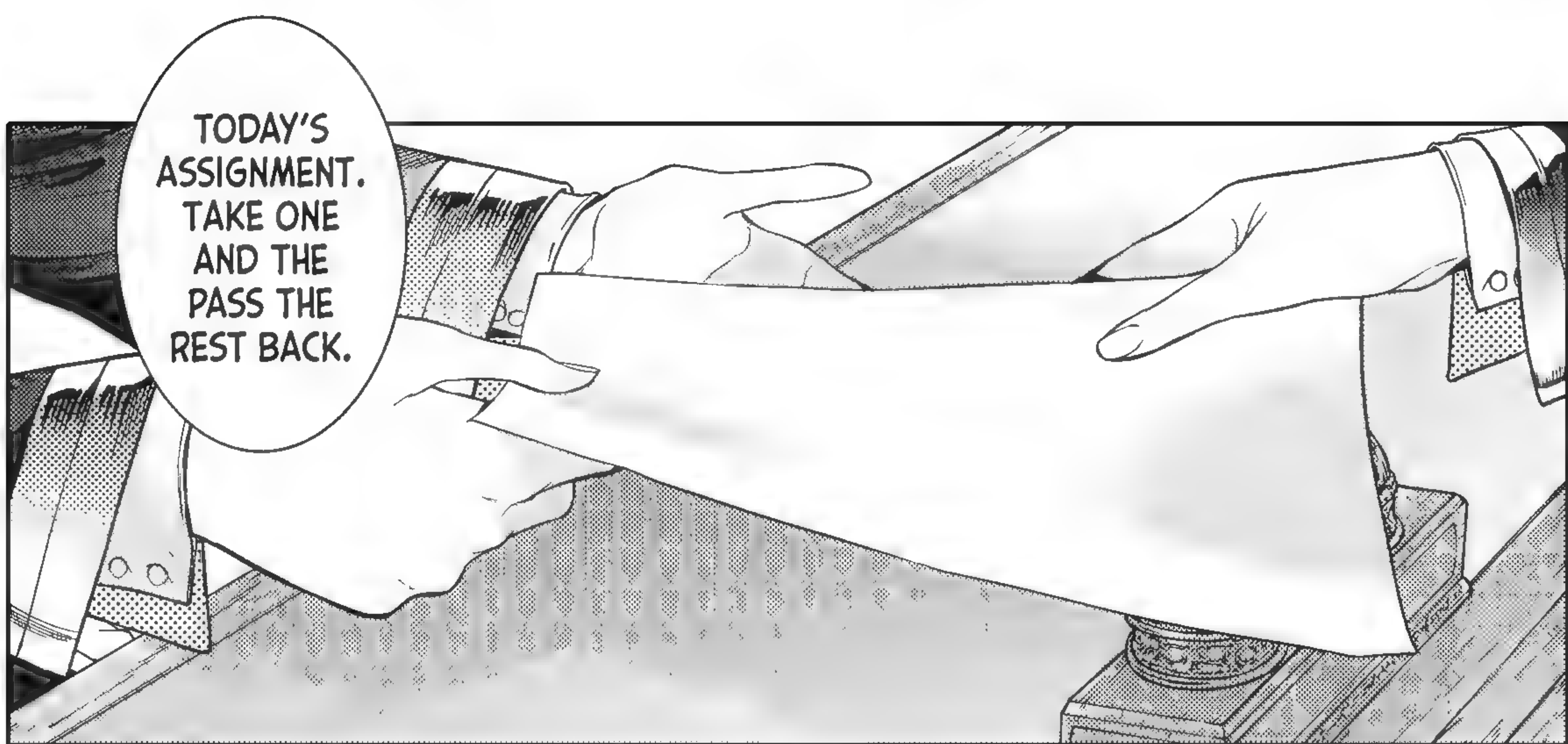
...SHE  
QUAKES  
LIKE THE  
RAGING  
EARTH...

...AND  
TOWERS ON  
HIGH LIKE  
WOTAN, THE  
MIGHTY  
SPIRIT OF  
THE FOREST.

BUT LOOK  
CLOSER...

...AND  
YOU  
FIND...





TODAY'S  
ASSIGNMENT.  
TAKE ONE  
AND THE  
PASS THE  
REST BACK.



CONSIDER  
IT MY WAY OF  
WELCOMING YOU,  
AS WE EMBARK  
ON THE YEAR OF  
RIGOROUS STUDY  
AHEAD.

I IMAGINE  
YOU WEREN'T  
EXPECTING A  
TEST ON DAY  
ONE.

SOMETHING  
LIGHT TO  
WARM UP  
WITH.



I'VE  
GOT  
THIS!

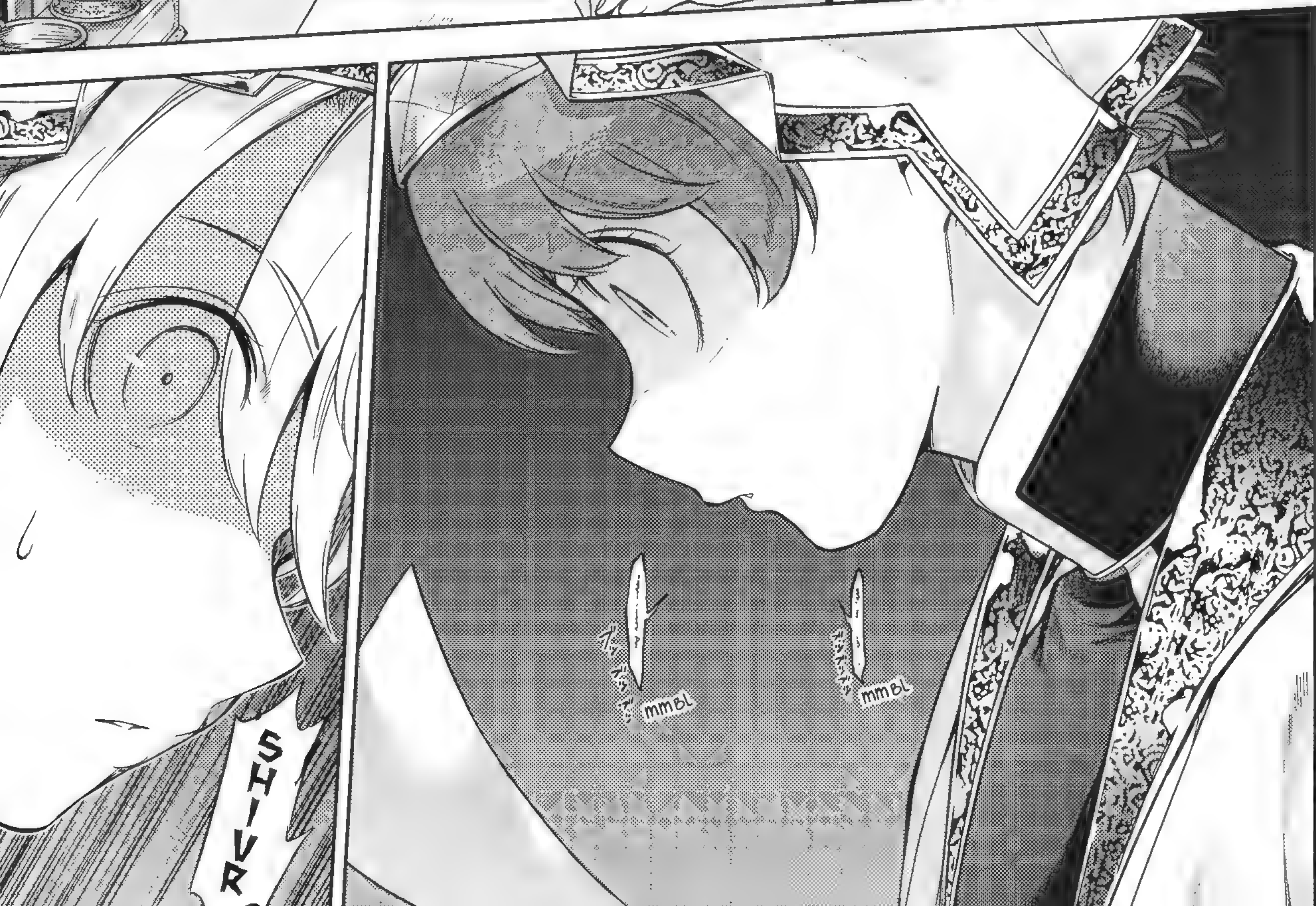


THINK OF  
IT AS AN  
EXTENSION  
OF THE  
KAFNA  
EXAM.

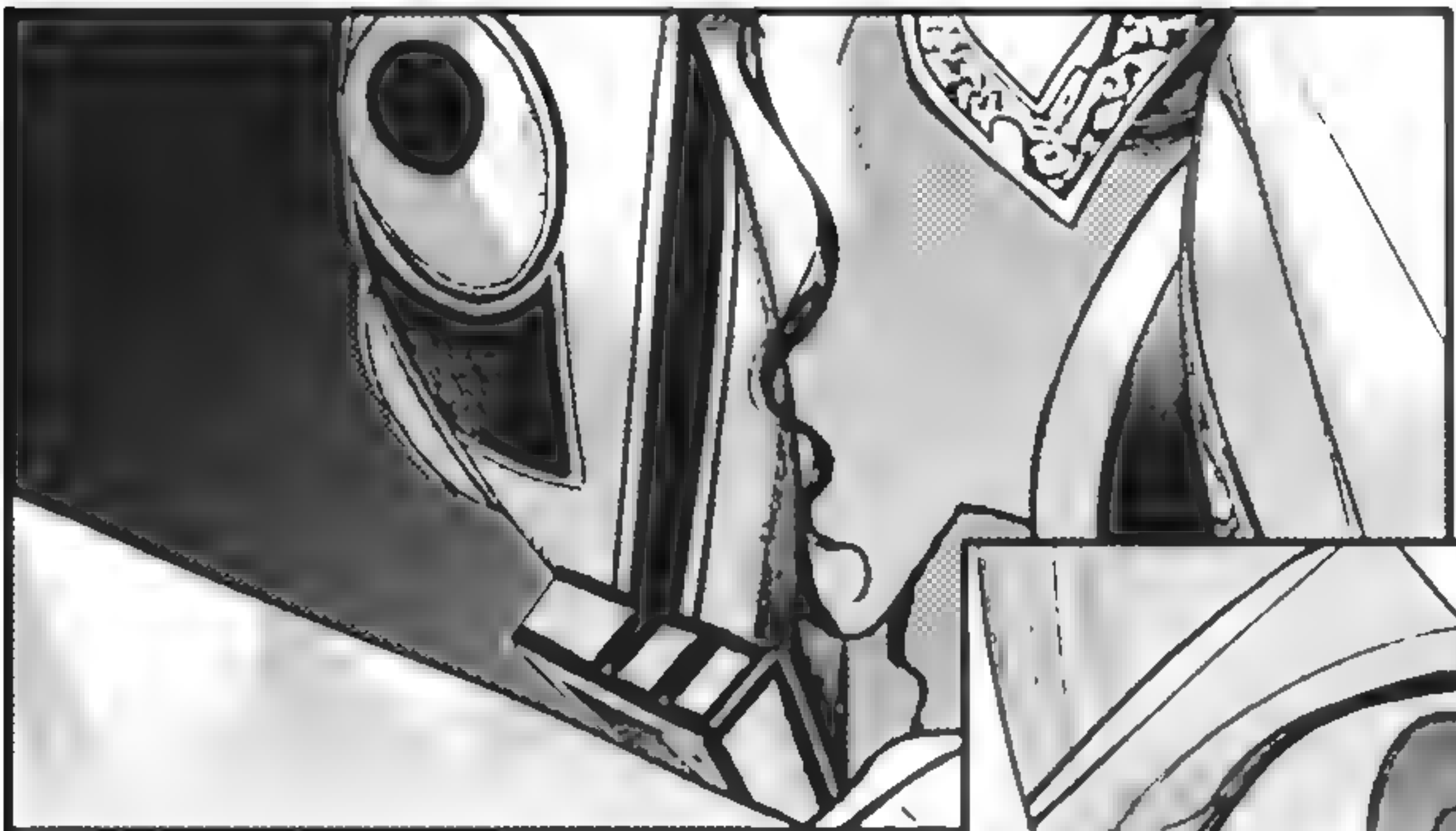


YOUR TIME  
STARTS NOW.  
BEGIN.

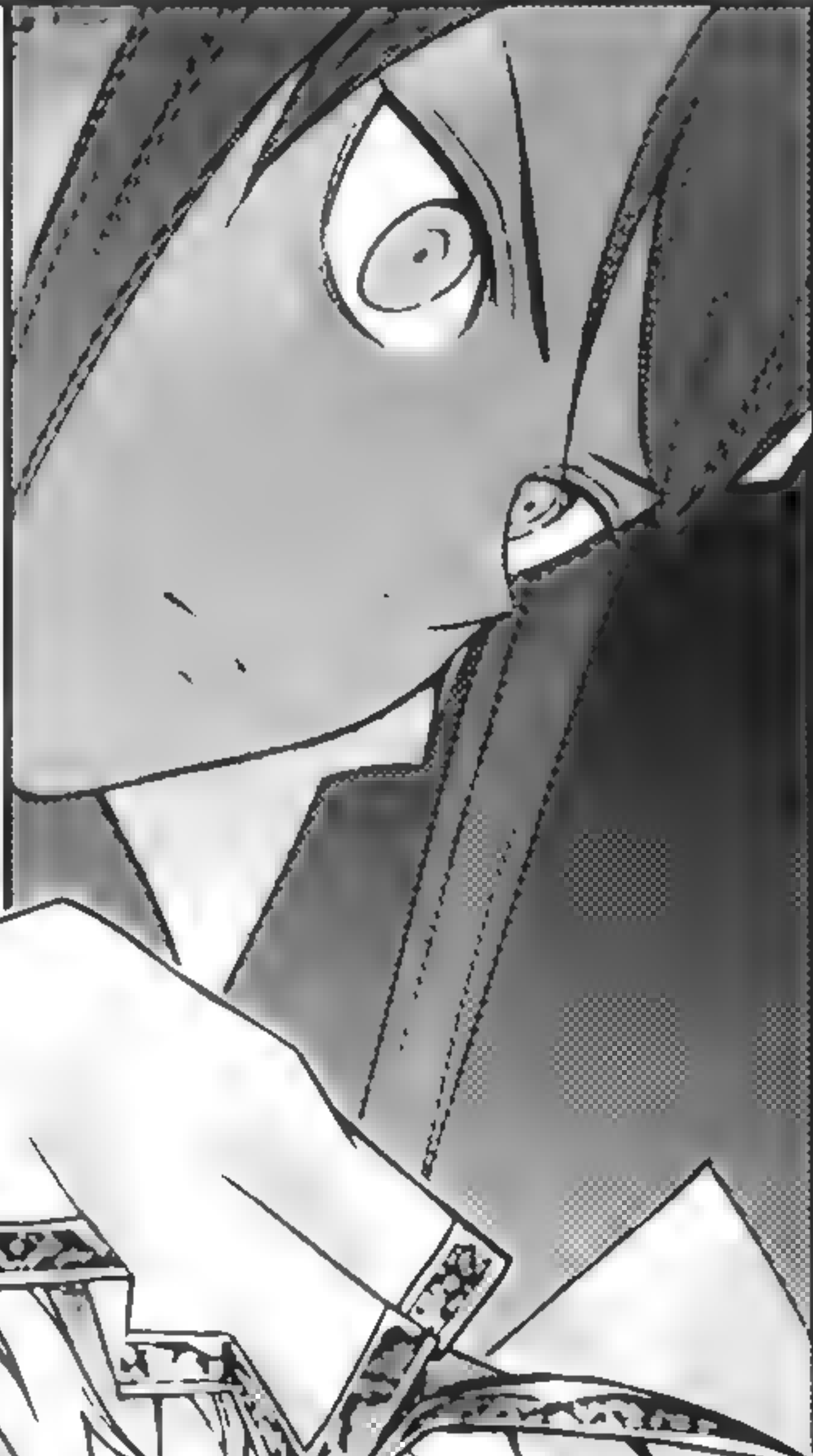








WH...?!



...COM-  
PLETELY  
DIFFERENT  
PEOPLE!

IT'S LIKE  
THEY'VE  
TURNED  
INTO...





DON'T LET  
IT THROW  
YOU OFF,  
THEO.

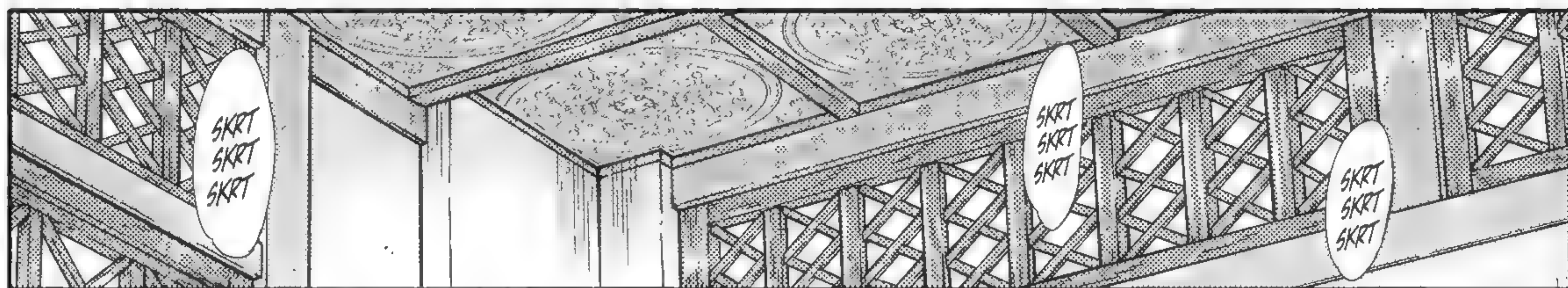
YOU  
PASSED,  
TOO.

YOU  
MADE  
IT HERE  
JUST LIKE  
THEM!



GULP...

RIGHT. SO  
THESE ARE  
THE MINDS  
CHOSEN  
TO BE  
KAFNA.



CLATTER ~~ハタ~~

TSK!

IF I HADN'T  
TAKEN THE TIME  
TO RECHECK MY  
ANSWERS,  
I WOULD'VE  
BEEN FIRST.

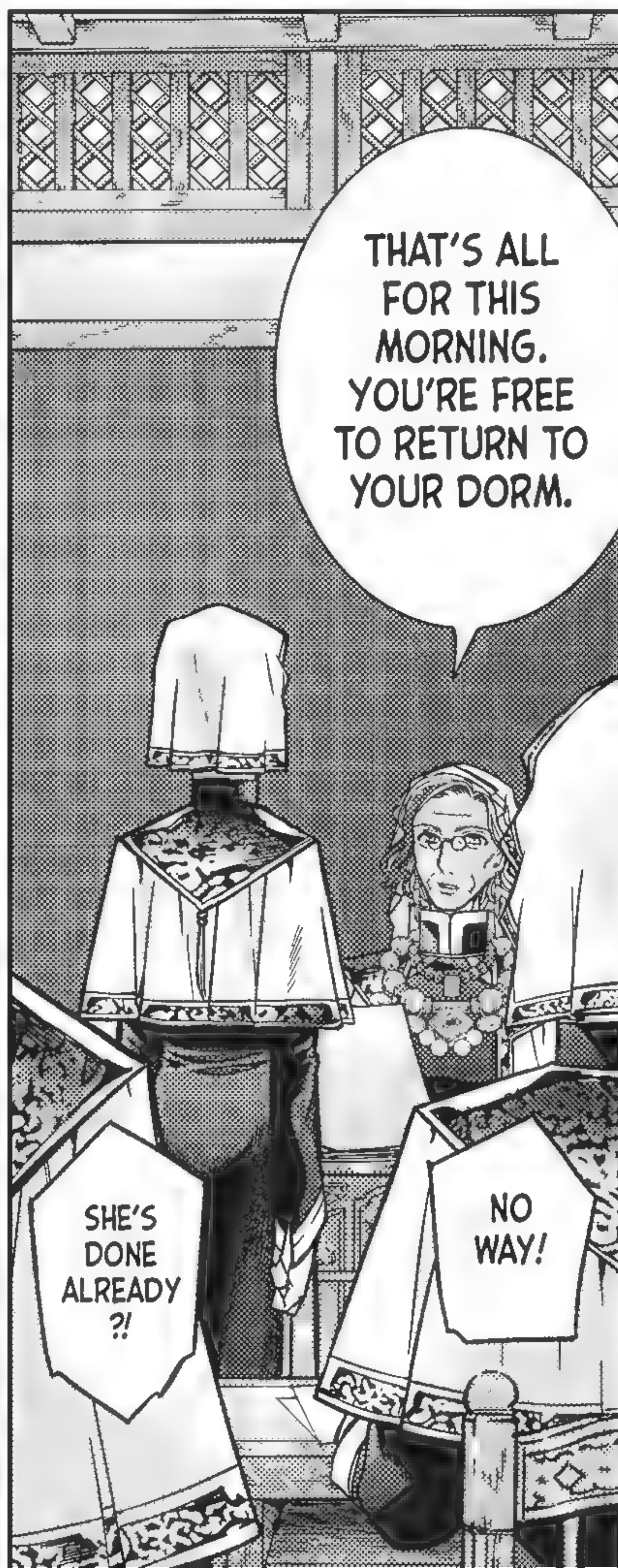


TA-  
DAH!  
DONE!

~~ハタ~~  
CLATTER



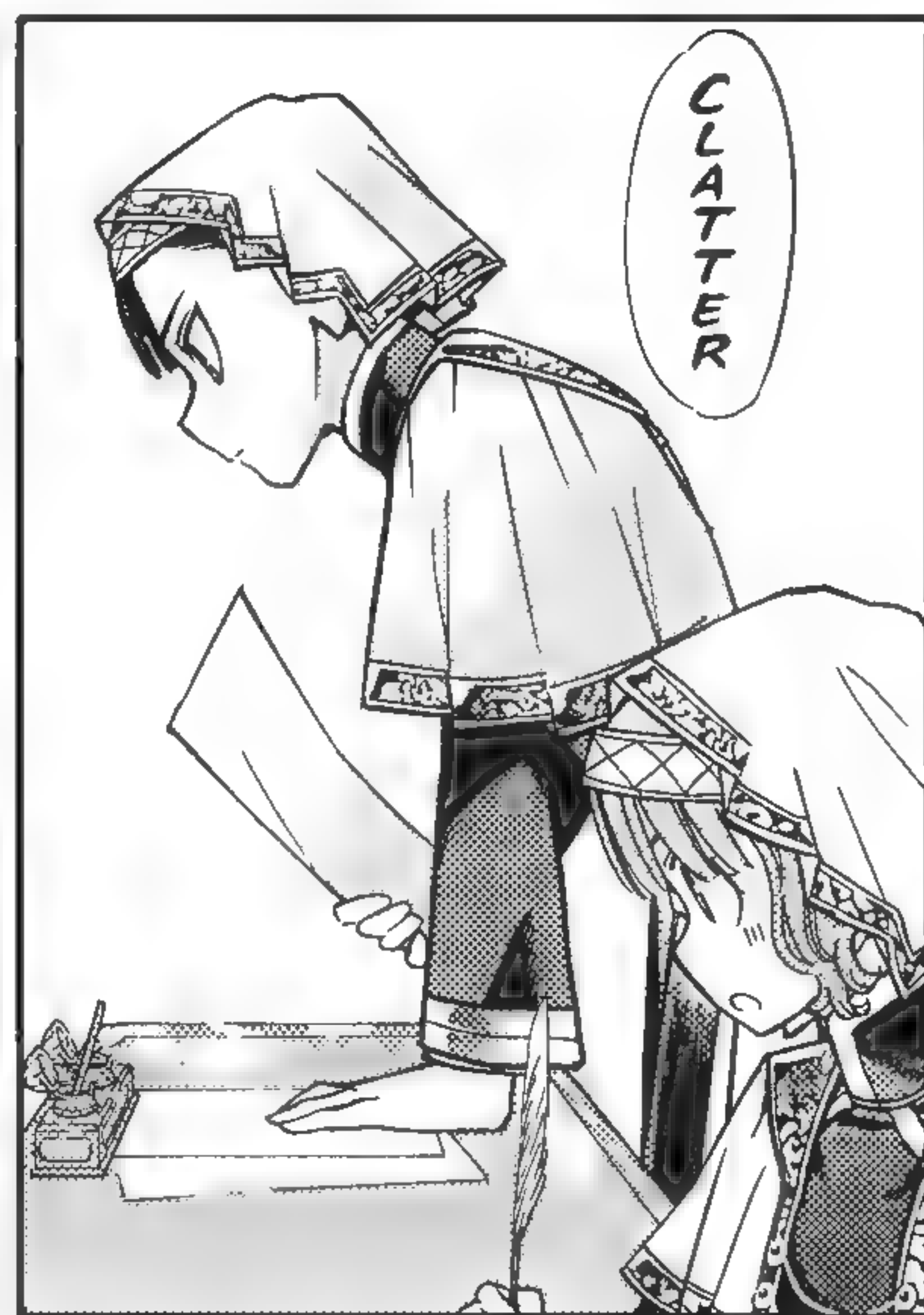
I'M READY  
TO HAVE MINE  
CHECKED,  
PROFESSOR.



THAT'S ALL  
FOR THIS  
MORNING.  
YOU'RE FREE  
TO RETURN TO  
YOUR DORM.

SHE'S  
DONE  
ALREADY  
?!

NO  
WAY!

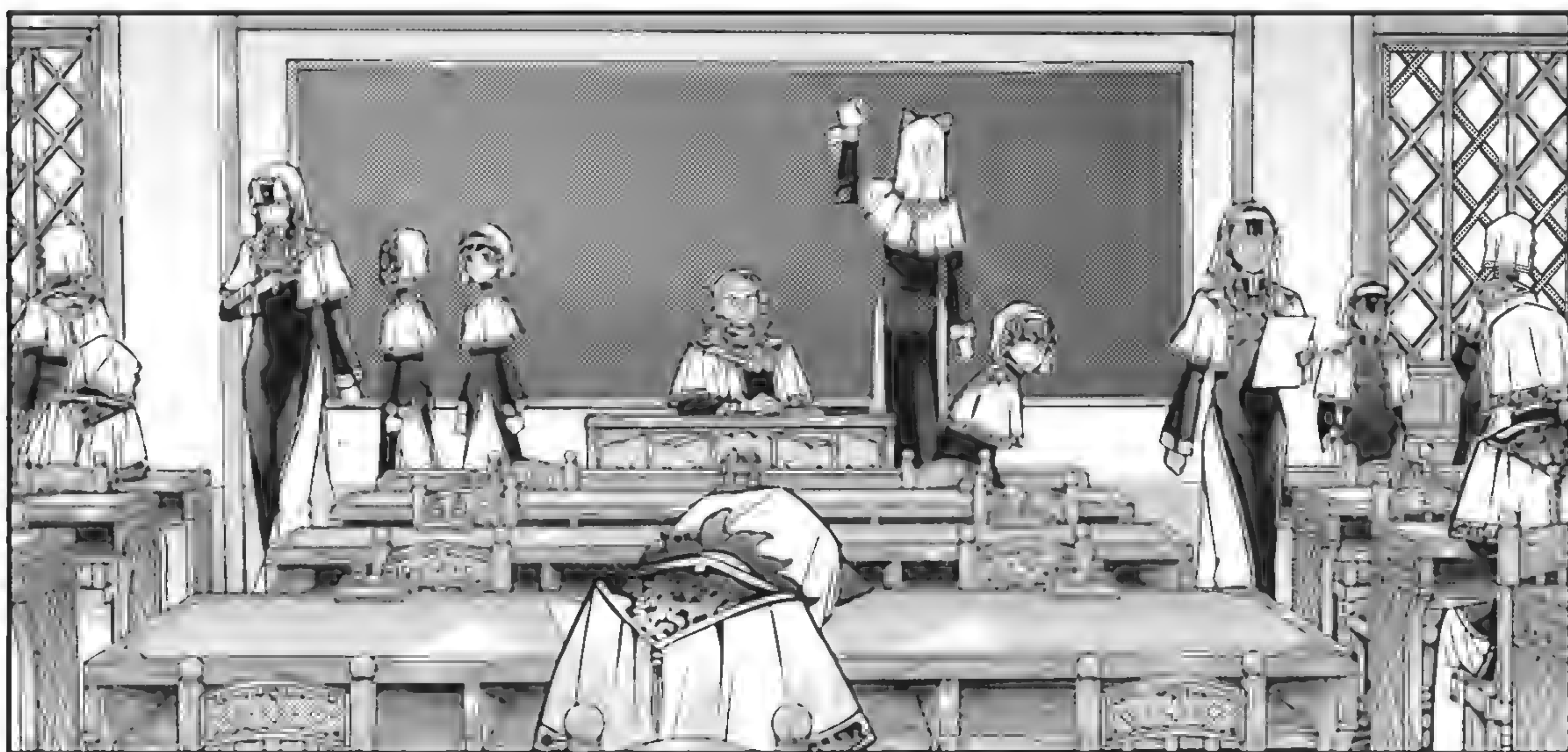


CLATTER

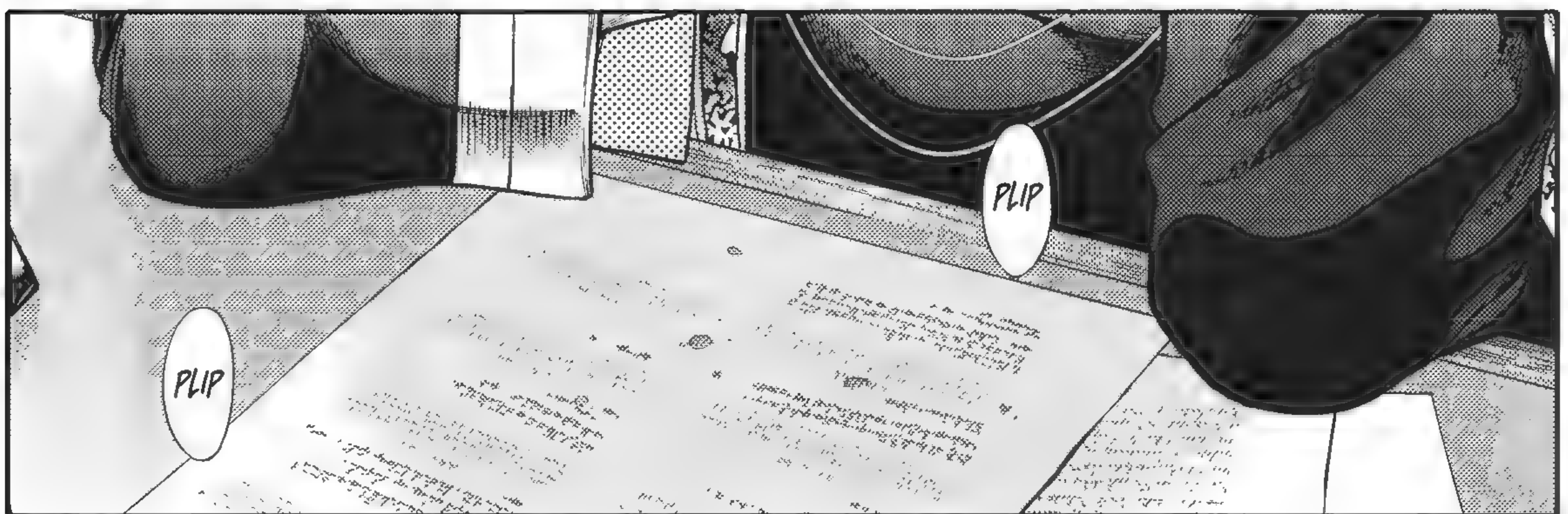
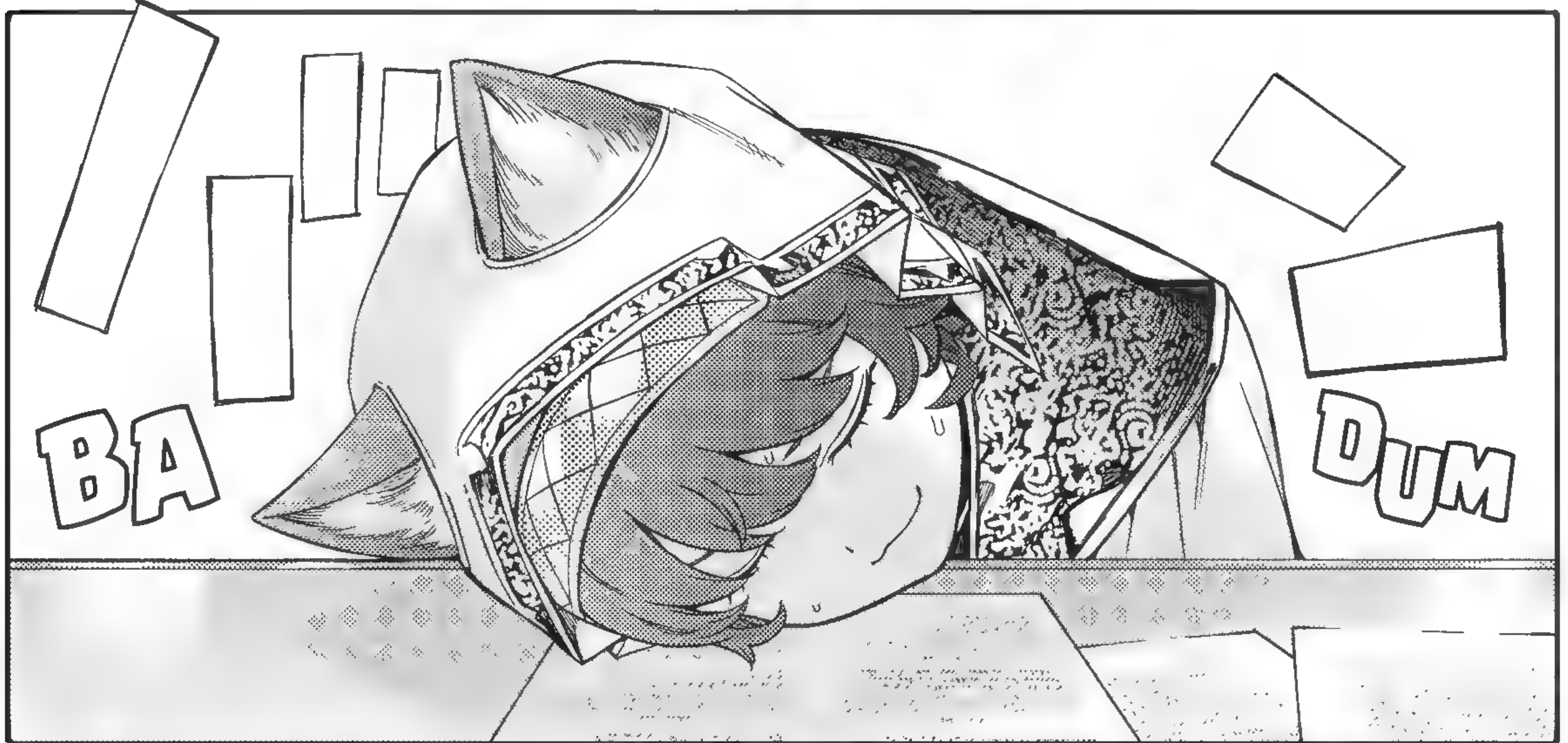


GOOD.  
THIS WILL  
DO JUST  
FINE.





















...AND YOU  
CAN'T EVEN  
MAKE IT  
THROUGH  
A PAGE  
OF BASIC  
PROBLEMS?!

ALL THAT  
TALK ABOUT  
YOUR NOBLE  
PEDIGREE...



MADHA!  
THAT'S  
ENOUGH!

BACK  
OFF,  
YAKO!

?!




IF YOU'RE  
GONNA  
RIDICULE  
SOMEONE,  
THERE'S A  
RIGHT WAY  
TO DO IT.

LOOK, I KNOW  
THAT A JOKE  
AS GOOD AS  
THIS IS HARD  
TO LET PASS.

YOU SAY  
YOUR PIECE  
ONE ON ONE,  
WITHOUT AN  
AUDIENCE.


BUT!





YOU MIGHT  
LEARN  
SOMETHING  
THIS TIME!

SO, HERE  
GOES...!  
HEY! WHY  
DON'T YOU  
HEAD BACK  
TO PREP  
SCHOOL?



WORD  
OUT OF  
YOU!!

NOT

MORE

ONE



HAH!  
RIGHT  
ON THE  
MONEY.




NO.  
LEAVE  
THEM  
BE.

WE'RE  
GOING,  
MADHA!

SHALL I  
INTER-  
VENE?





HOW COULD ANYONE NOT FINISH A TEST THAT SIMPLE?

I'm serious, Blondie. I wanna know.

THIS IS MY FAULT.

IT'S 'CAUSE YOU DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP, ISN'T IT? I SHOULDN'T HAVE TALKED SO MUCH.

NO. DON'T APOLOGIZE.

THIS WAS A PERFECT DEMONSTRATION OF WHERE I'M AT.



I WAS READY FOR THIS.

THE PROBLEM NOW...

I didn't even know tests could be that hard...

...IS FIGURING OUT HOW I'M GOING TO CATCH UP.



I KNEW THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.





I MEAN,  
I'LL ADMIT  
IT WAS KINDA  
FUNNY SEEING  
HER LOSE  
FACE.

WE HAVE  
TO *LIVE*  
WITH THESE  
PEOPLE, YOU  
KNOW?

YOU'VE  
GOT TO QUIT  
STIRRING UP  
TROUBLE.

SHUT IT,  
YAKO.

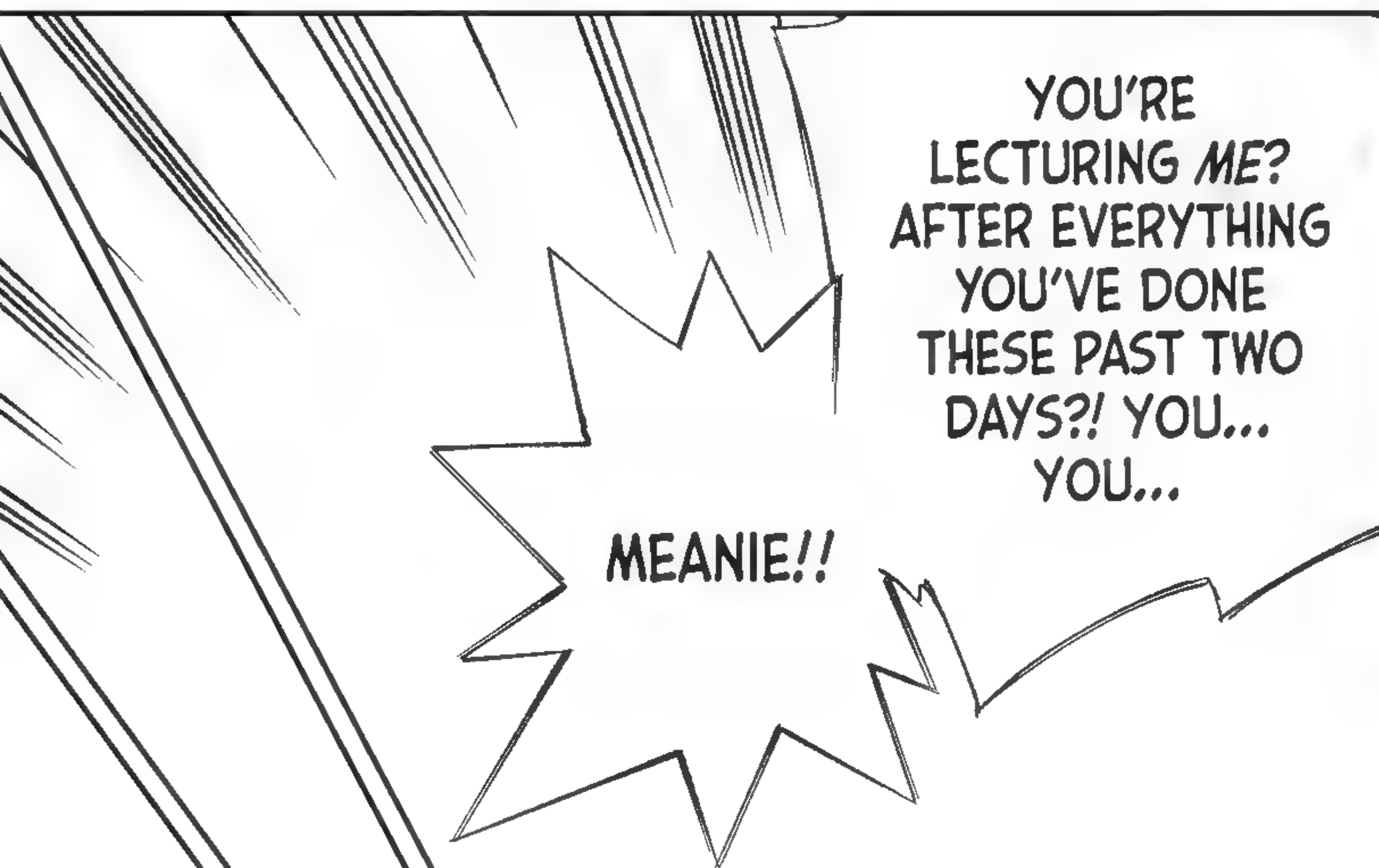


MADHA!  
HEY! LISTEN  
TO ME!



...THAN  
INSULTING  
SOMEONE  
BEHIND  
THEIR  
BACK.

DON'T TALK  
BAD ABOUT HER  
WHEN SHE'S NOT  
AROUND. THERE'S  
NOTHING MORE  
SPINELESS...



YOU'RE  
LECTURING *ME*?  
AFTER EVERYTHING  
YOU'VE DONE  
THESE PAST TWO  
DAYS?! YOU...  
YOU...

MEANIE!!







ALL SIGNS POINT TO NO.

WHERE DO THEY GET ALL THAT *ENERGY*? THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL KEEP UP.

**TZAKO NAMIR**  
AGE 20  
(3 FAILED EXAM ATTEMPTS)



WELL, WHADDYA THINK, MADAM?

THINK WE CAN HACK IT AMONG ALL THESE YOUNGINS?

**METT NANAU**  
AGE 19  
(4 FAILED EXAM ATTEMPTS)



NOW, NOW.

IF YOU GO AROUND SAYING THAT, YOU'LL MAKE THE *REAL* FOSSIL FEEL BAD.



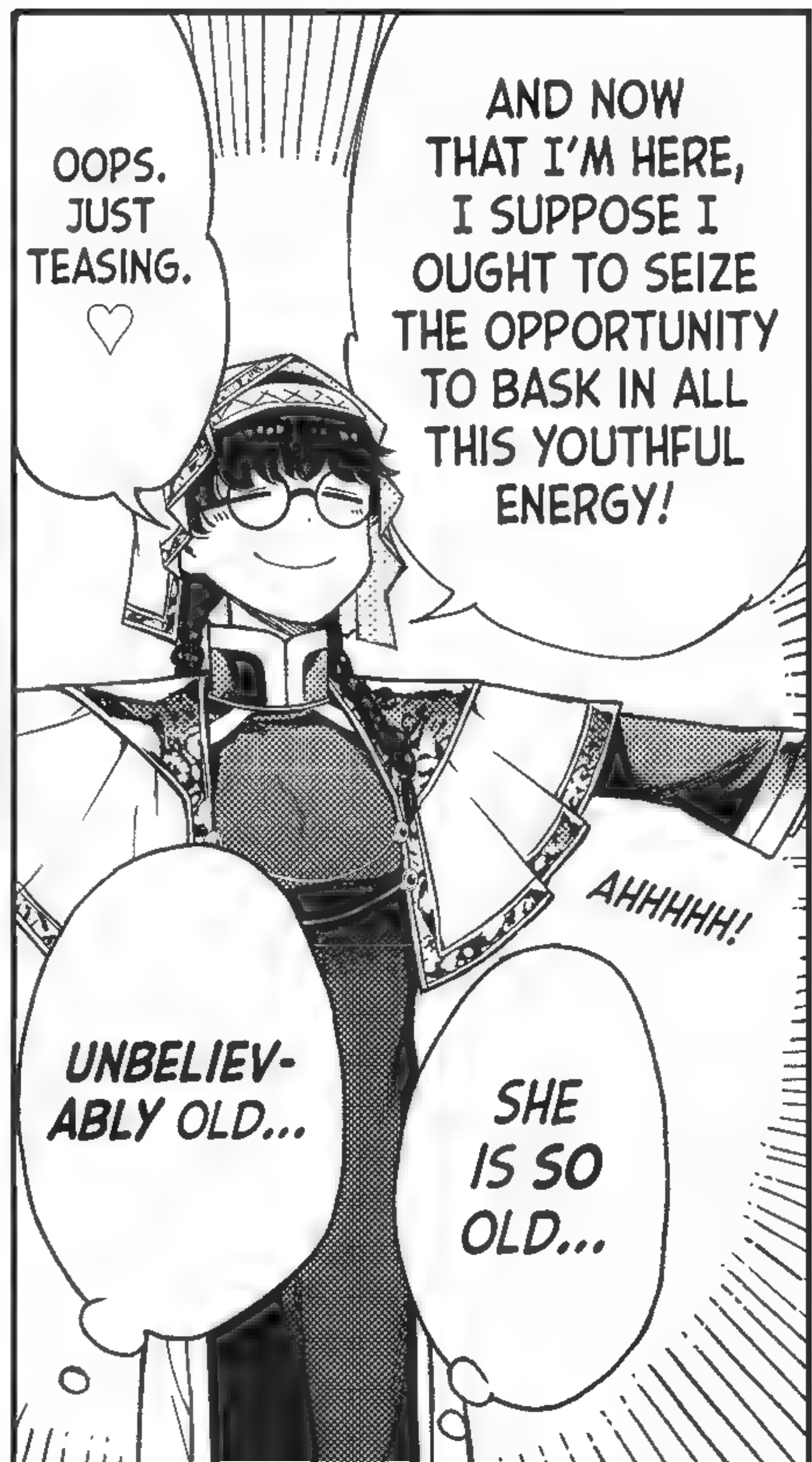
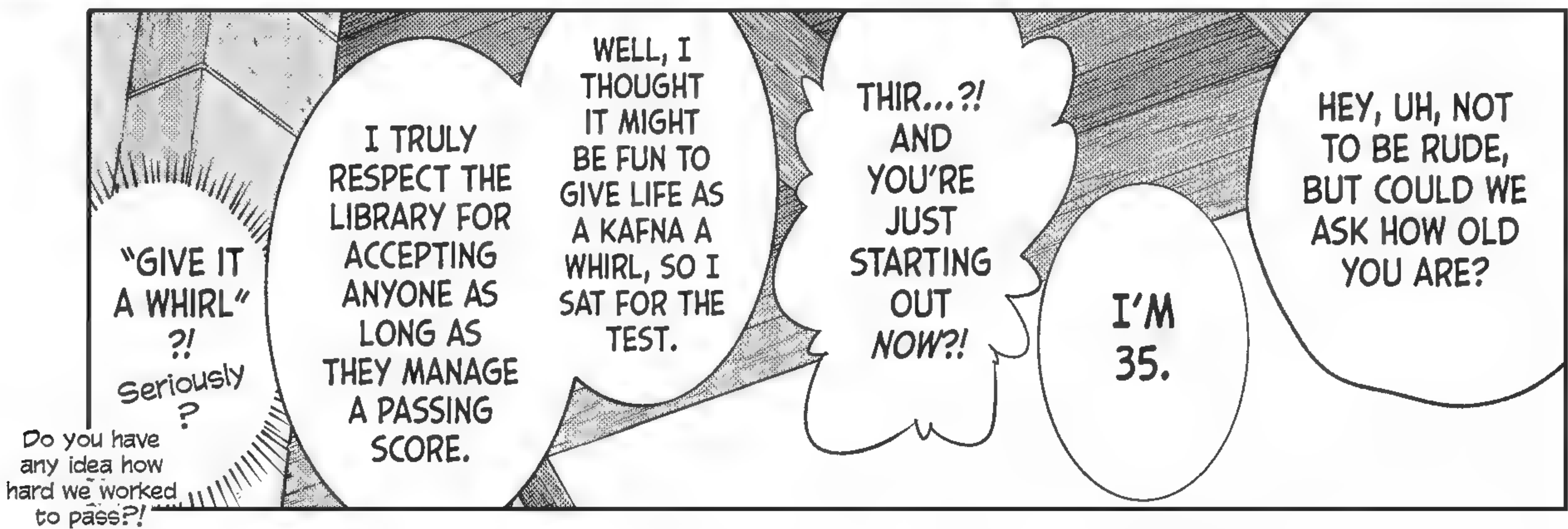
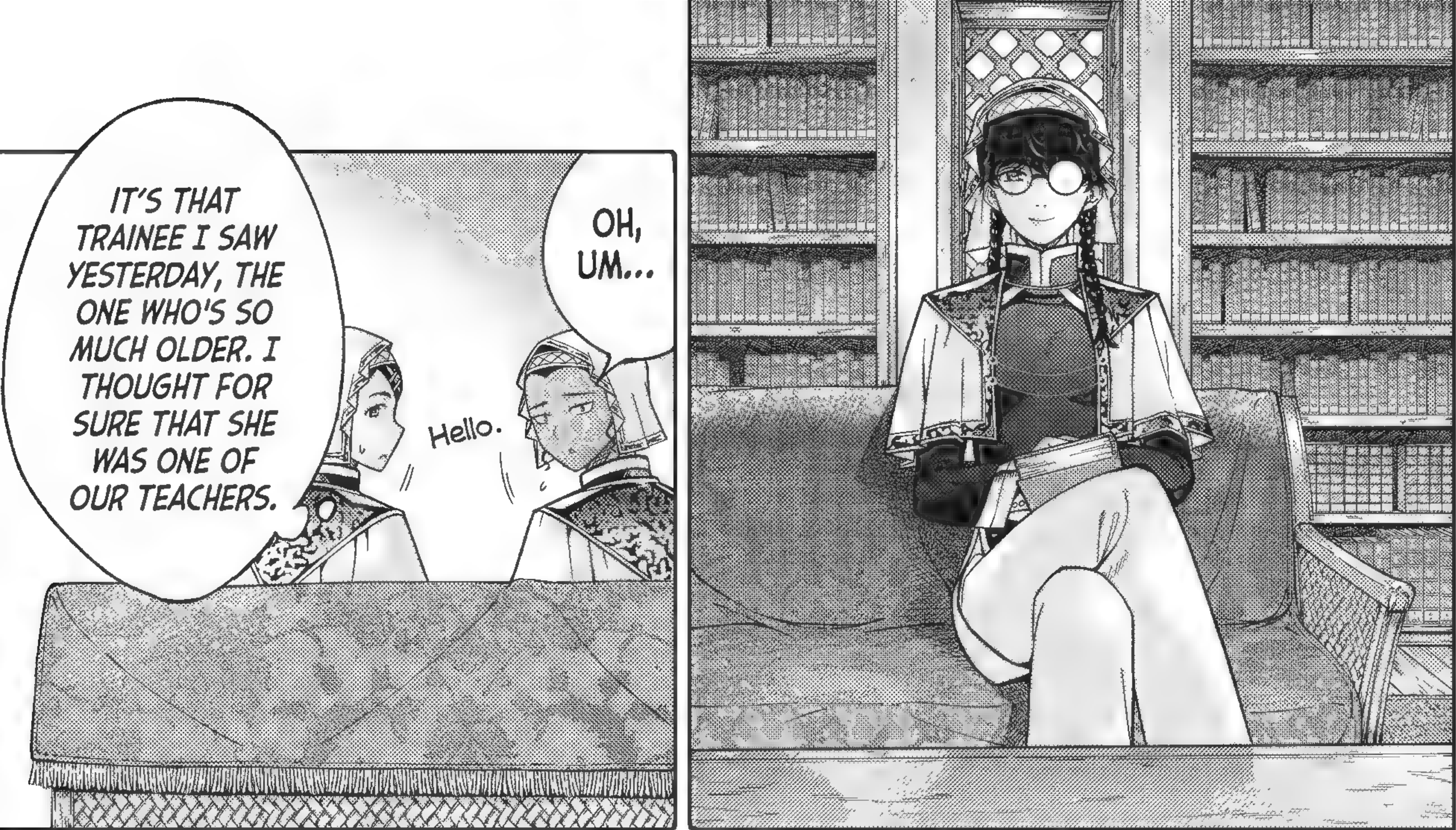
APPARENTLY, THE YOUNGEST IS ONLY *ELEVEN*!

WHAT'S WORSE IS THAT MOST PASSED ON THEIR FIRST TRY.

AND THAT PROFESSOR! TALK ABOUT SCARY!

THERE'S NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT. YOU AND I ARE JUST O-L-D. A COUPLE OF FOSSILS, REALLY.











# Living Brief

## The Kafna in Training The Power of a Smile

### Sae Fumis

A Hydiah girl who almost never stops fidgeting. Occasionally demonstrates intense focus, able to concentrate on a single task all day long without breaks or meals. This peculiar mix of traits causes her longtime friend Tepel no small amount of grief.

### Shuko Tcovach

An ordinary girl. Intelligent, cheerful, and full of energy—a wealth of wonderful traits, really, yet somehow doesn't stand out among this particular crowd.

### Madha Kamlan

A spirited, somewhat boyish girl. Grew up with three sisters and nary a brother in sight, leaving her parents somewhat mystified over her confrontational nature and rough speech. Has a feminine side, too. Enjoys discussing love and romance.

### Dianasys di'Ohgga

A girl with both Creyak and Hyron lineage. Though outwardly bubbly and carefree, is at heart very considerate of others, constantly watching for ways to maintain high spirits and good harmony among the group. Has the ability to sense where others fix their gaze.

### Kiraha Kyamnan

A somewhat capricious girl who doesn't sweat the details—an attitude sometimes mistakenly construed by others as a lack of sincerity. But her determination shines through whenever she has a goal in mind, sending her merrily skipping along on the path to success.

### Peperico Pradhatti

A Kokopah girl who is fascinated with kafna to an almost worrying extent. Worked hard to become one expressly so she'd be able to wear the signature attire. Spends her days flitting around, busily gathering new details to include in the profiles she keeps on every kafna she hears of.





### Natica Quapan

A 15-year-old girl with a very lustrous forehead. Received the second best score, after Aya, on the written portion of the exam. Chose to become a kafna to support her family, as her father is ill and unable to work. A chronic worrier often heard repeating the phrase, "Just to be safe."

### Sytlah Cueh

A somewhat high-strung girl who harbors no shortage of small dissatisfactions about the world. Realizes there'd be no end to her complaints if she got started, so tries not to mention them out loud. Loves the smell of ink from a newly-purchased book.

### Medina Hahal'k

Youngest daughter of the renowned House Hahal'k. A devout practitioner of Asin—specifically the Akini denomination, known for its particularly pious adherents. Enjoys viewing artwork in her leisure time.

### Cauicha Hozanyk

Daughter of the business magnate behind the Hozanyk Conglomerate. Has an intense distaste for ambiguity and refuses to mince words. An expert at mental arithmetic, able to instantly multiply any pair of five-digit numbers.

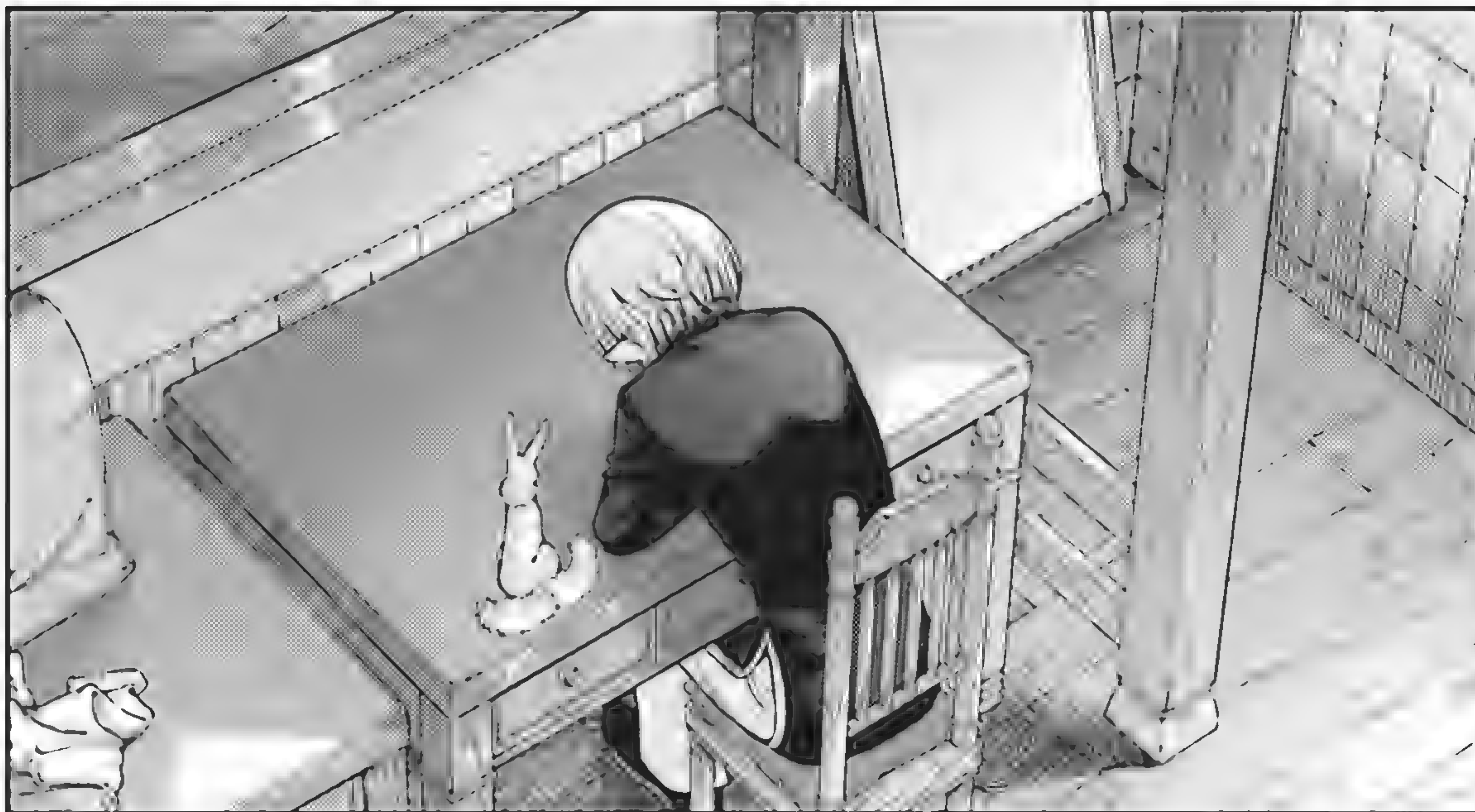


17

## *An Almost Transparent Future*















BUT  
I'M NOT  
FEELING  
FIRED UP.  
NOT AT  
ALL!

I THOUGHT  
MAYBE IF I SAID  
THE KINDA THING  
THE HERO IN  
AN ADVENTURE  
NOVEL MIGHT  
SAY, IT'D LIFT  
MY SPIRITS.



WILL THE  
TEACHERS  
HAVE TO  
RETHINK  
THE CUR-  
RICULUM  
JUST ON  
ACCOUNT  
OF ME?

WILL I  
END UP  
SLOWING  
THE  
WHOLE  
CLASS  
DOWN?!

FEAR!  
THAT'S  
WHAT I'M  
FEELING...



KA-  
CHAK

NOW I  
DON'T THINK  
I'LL HAVE  
TIME FOR  
ANYTHING!

I THOUGHT  
I MIGHT  
HAVE TIME  
TO EXPLORE  
THE LIBRARY  
WHEN I GOT  
HERE.

HAAAH...





YOU CAME  
STRAIGHT  
BACK HERE  
AFTER  
LUNCH!

THEO! IS  
EVERYTHING  
ALL RIGHT?



I KNOW  
THIS PLACE  
LIKE THE  
BACK OF  
MY HAND!

I WAS  
BORN AND  
RAISED  
*INSIDE*  
THESE CITY  
WALLS, SO—

WHACK



WHAP WHAP

C'MON.  
YOU'RE NOT  
STILL HUNG  
UP ON THAT  
SILLY TEST,  
ARE YOU?

IT'S NOTHING  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT! HEY,  
HOW ABOUT I  
TAKE YOU ON  
A TOUR OF THE  
LIBRARY?



CHESTNUT  
DOES THE  
JOB, SO I'M  
GONNA KEEP  
USING IT.

THAT'S  
ANOTHER THING!  
QUIT CALLING  
US "CHESTNUT"  
AND "BLONDIE"!  
WE'RE NOT  
HAIR COLORS!

LAY OFF,  
CHESTNUT. YOU  
KNOW THERE ISN'T  
TIME FOR A TOUR  
BEFORE OUR NEXT  
CLASS STARTS.

OWWW!



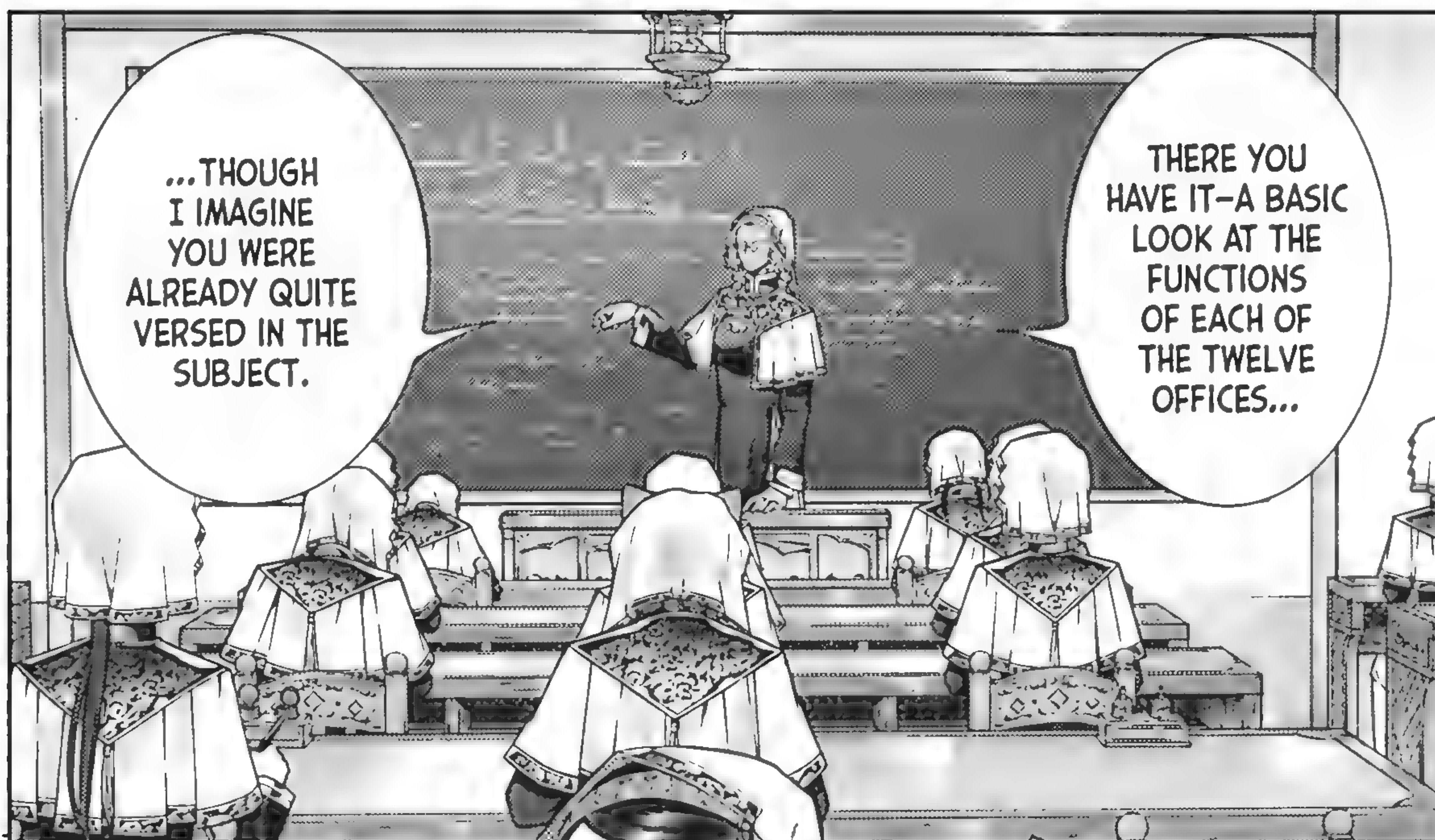


THE JUVENILE OFFICE IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE READING HABITS AMONG CHILDREN.

...AND, OF COURSE, ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING THE DAILY STORY-TELLING SESSIONS AT CENTRAL LIBRARIES TWO THROUGH FIVE.



...OTHER DUTIES INCLUDE THE SELECTION OF TITLES FOR READING WEEK...



...THOUGH I IMAGINE YOU WERE ALREADY QUITE VERSED IN THE SUBJECT.

THERE YOU HAVE IT—A BASIC LOOK AT THE FUNCTIONS OF EACH OF THE TWELVE OFFICES...



WE'D LIKE TO KNOW WHICH OFFICES YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR UPON BECOMING FULL-FLEDGED KAFNA.

THANK YOU, PROFESSOR. NOW, THERE'S ONE FINAL ITEM ON TODAY'S AGENDA. A QUESTIONNAIRE.



# The Twelve Offices

*But at the Central Library, all necessary functions are split across twelve divisions. Each kafna is assigned to one, spending an entire career dedicated to its specific duties. These divisions are known simply...*

*...as the Twelve Offices.*

General Affairs  
Office

Guidance  
Office

Treasury  
Office

Judicial  
Office

Archival  
Office

Cataloging  
Office

Restorations  
Office

Personnel  
Office

Facilities  
Office

Liaisons  
Office

Juvenile  
Office

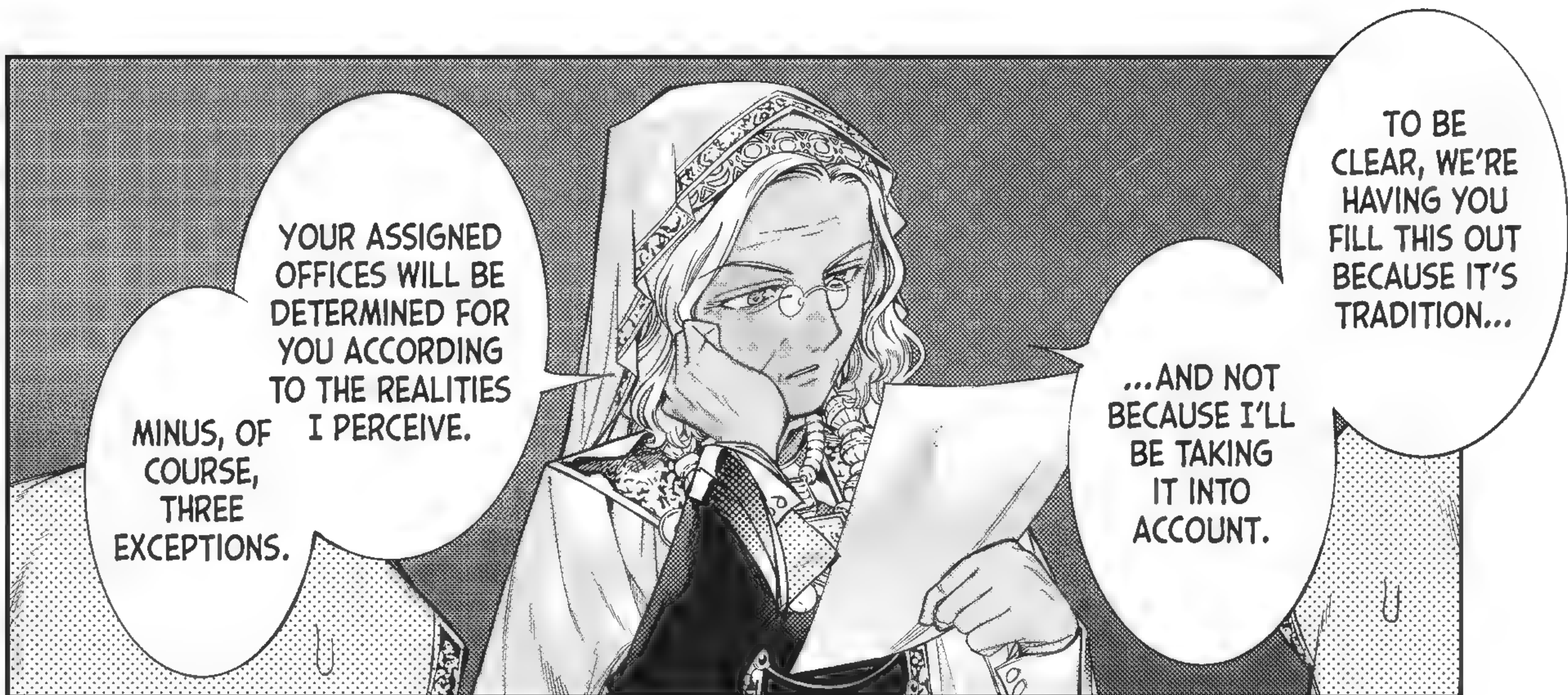
Protections  
Office

*At a typical regional library, a single librarian might balance all manner of tasks, repairing damaged books, maintaining the catalog, and deciding upon new acquisitions as needed.*

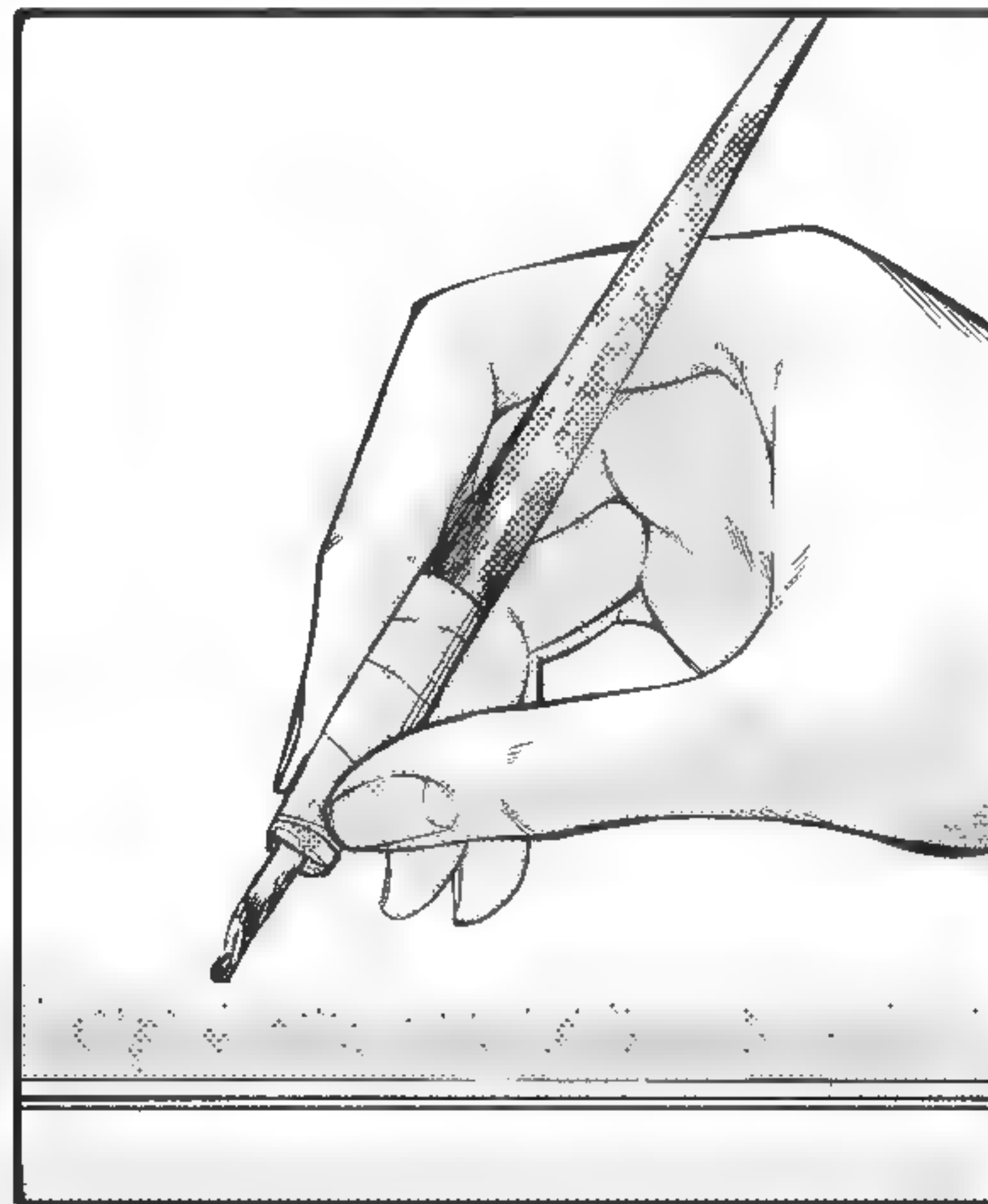
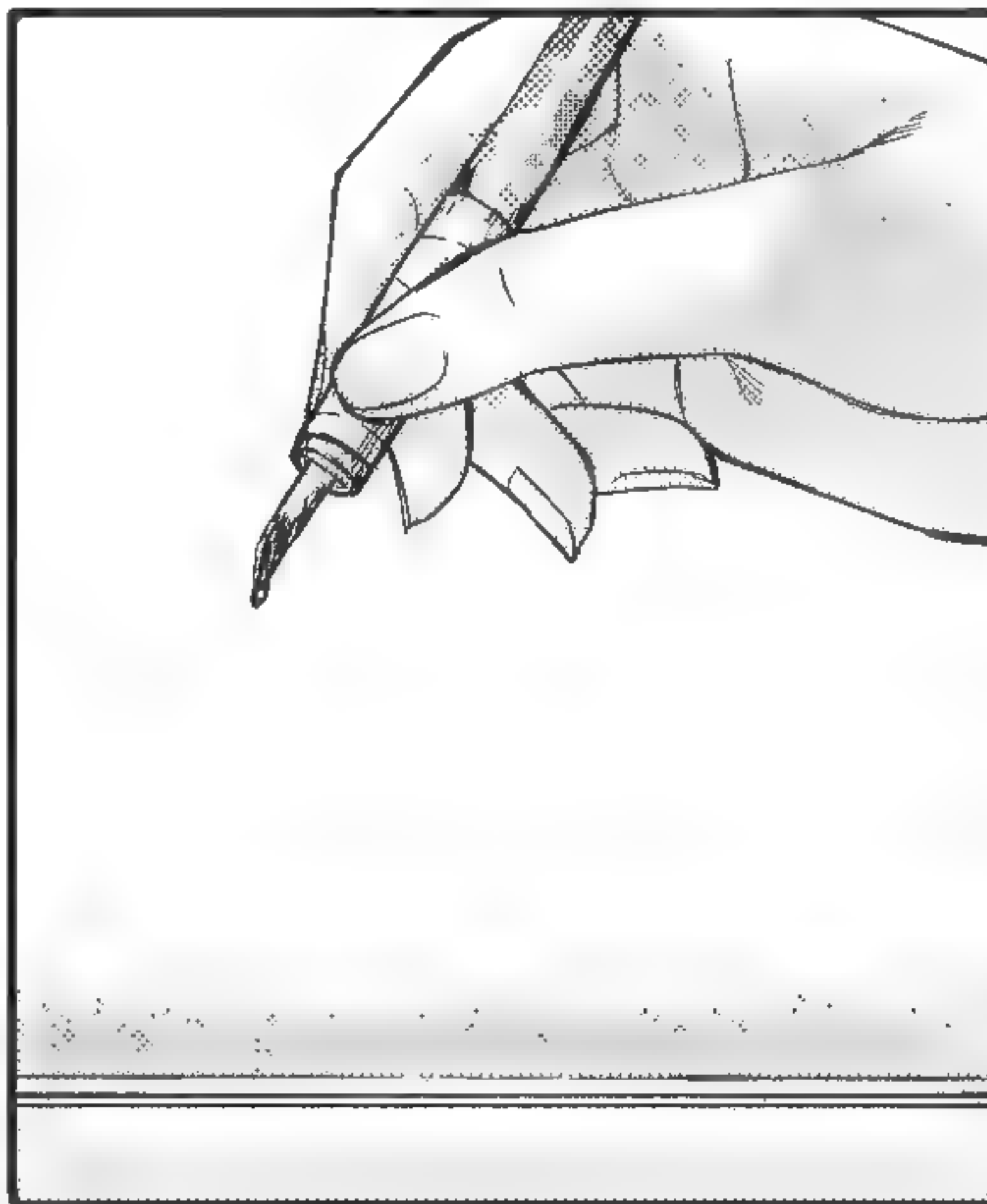
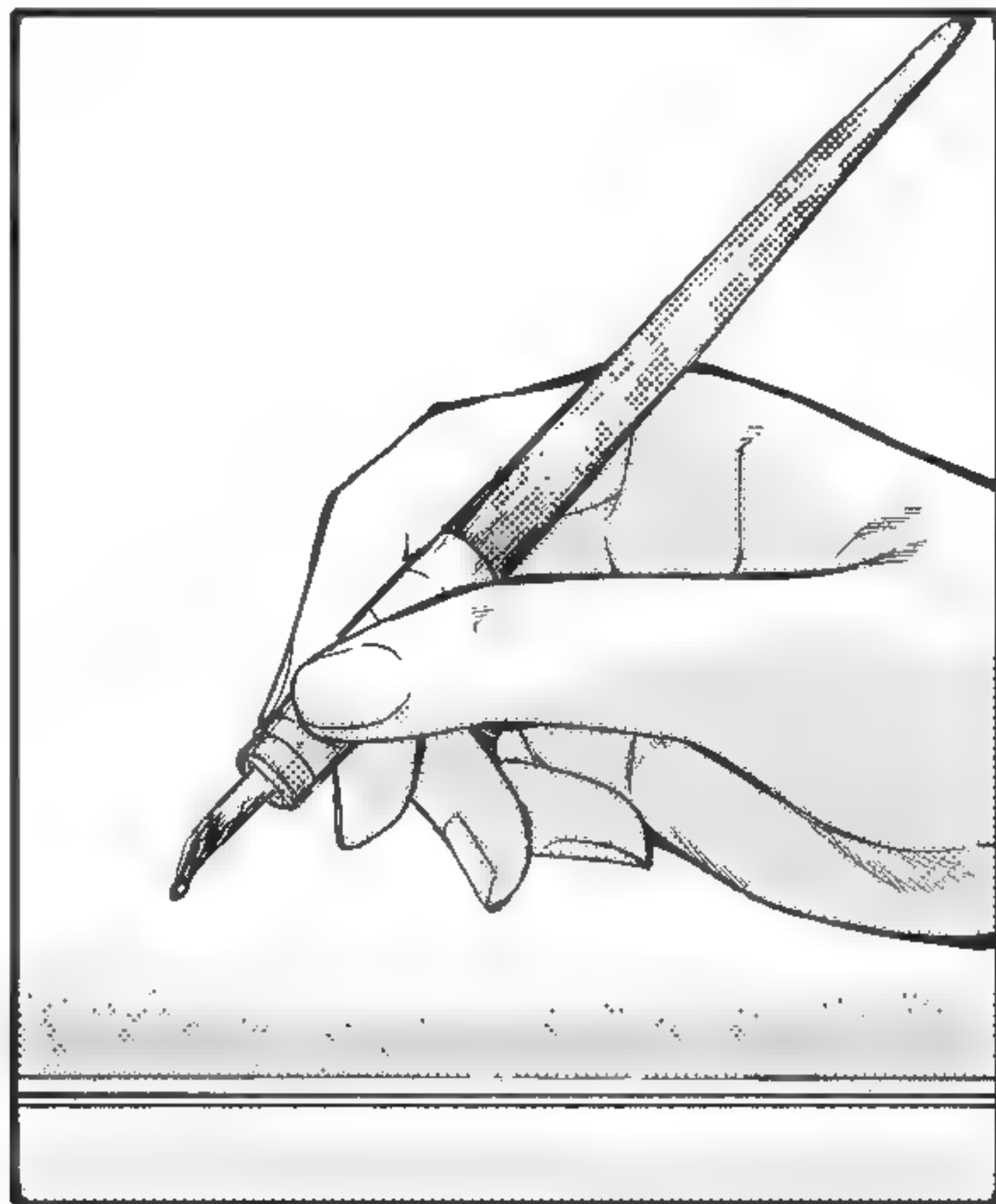
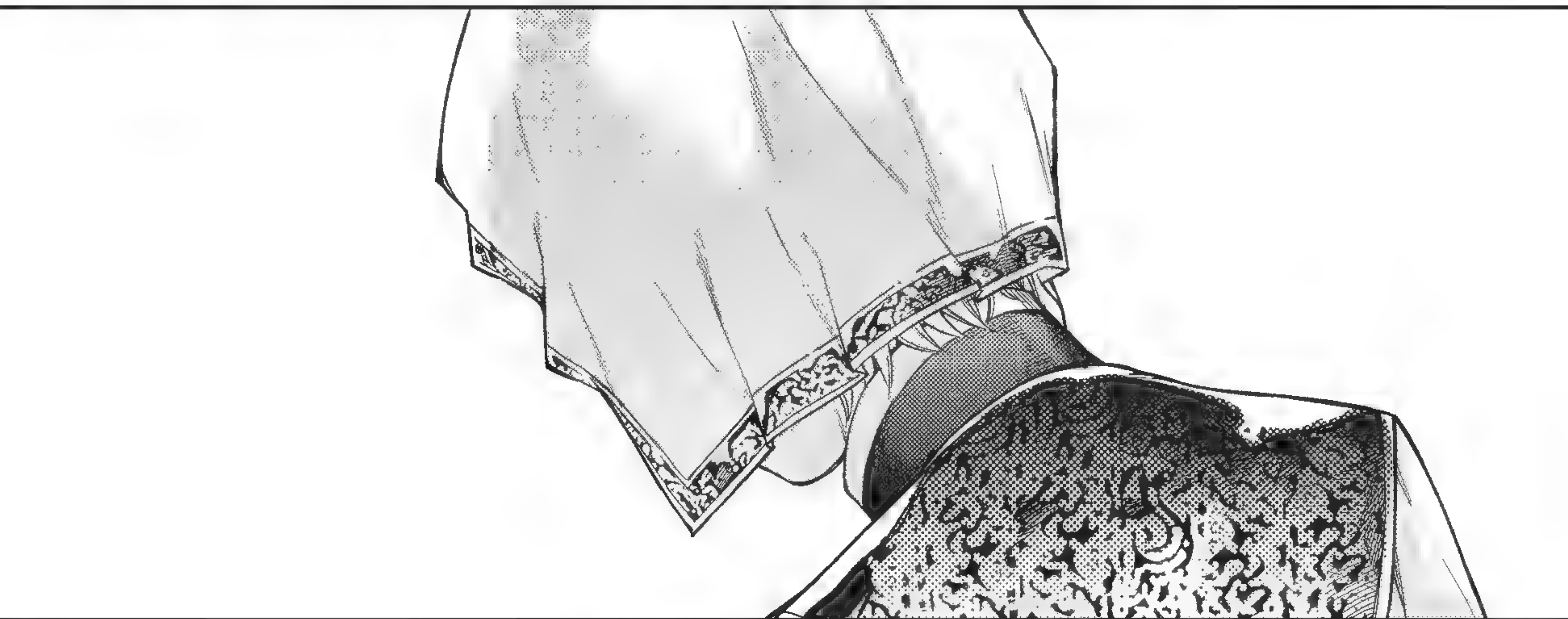
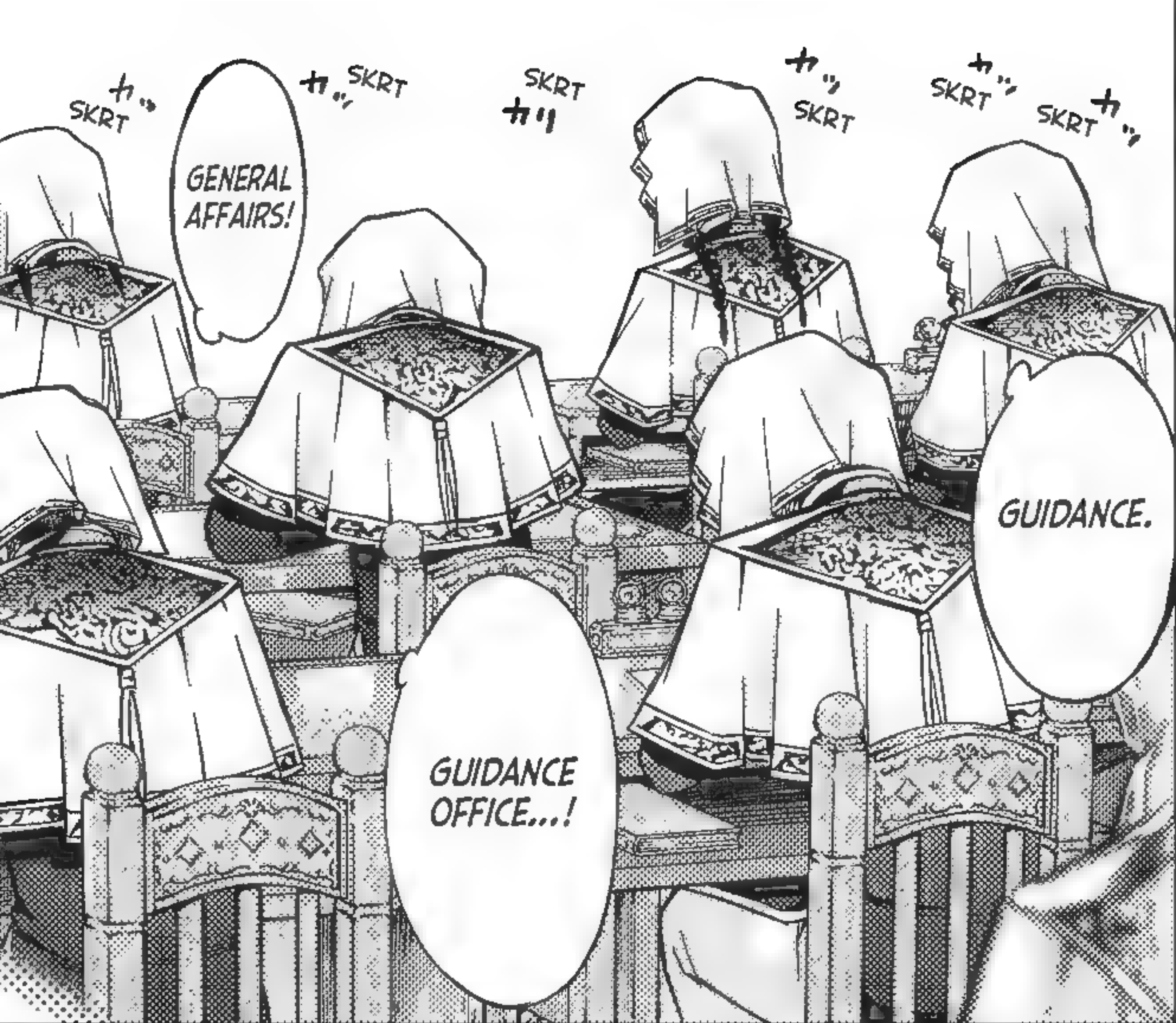
THERE'S  
SPACE  
TO WRITE  
THREE  
CHOICES.

*New kafna in training spent one year studying the roles the offices played, after which time their head supervisor determined to which of the twelve they will each be assigned.*

















ONCE YOUR  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
IS IN, YOU'RE  
FREE TO GO.



ALL RIGHT.  
PASS YOUR  
ANSWERS  
FORWARD,  
PLEASE.



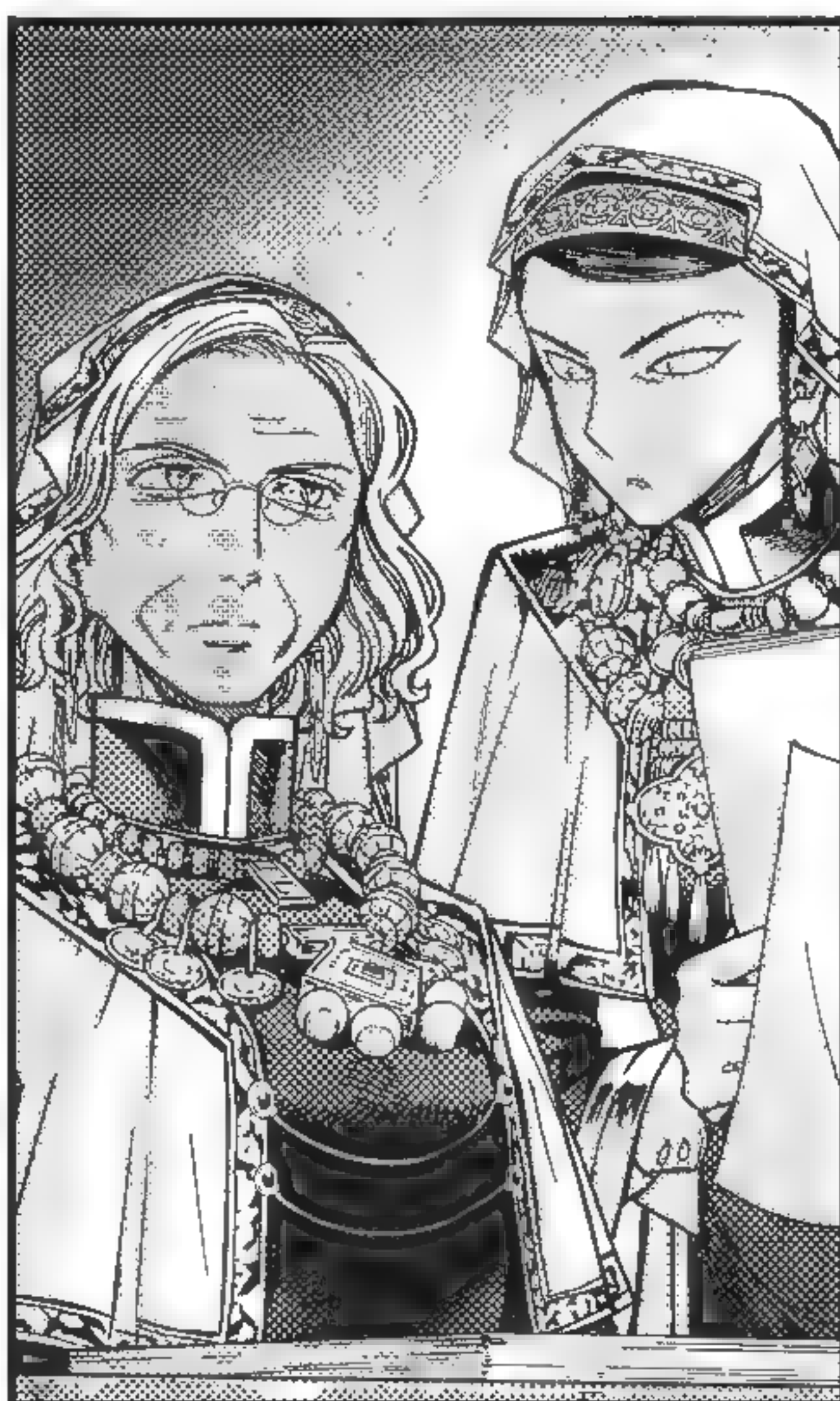
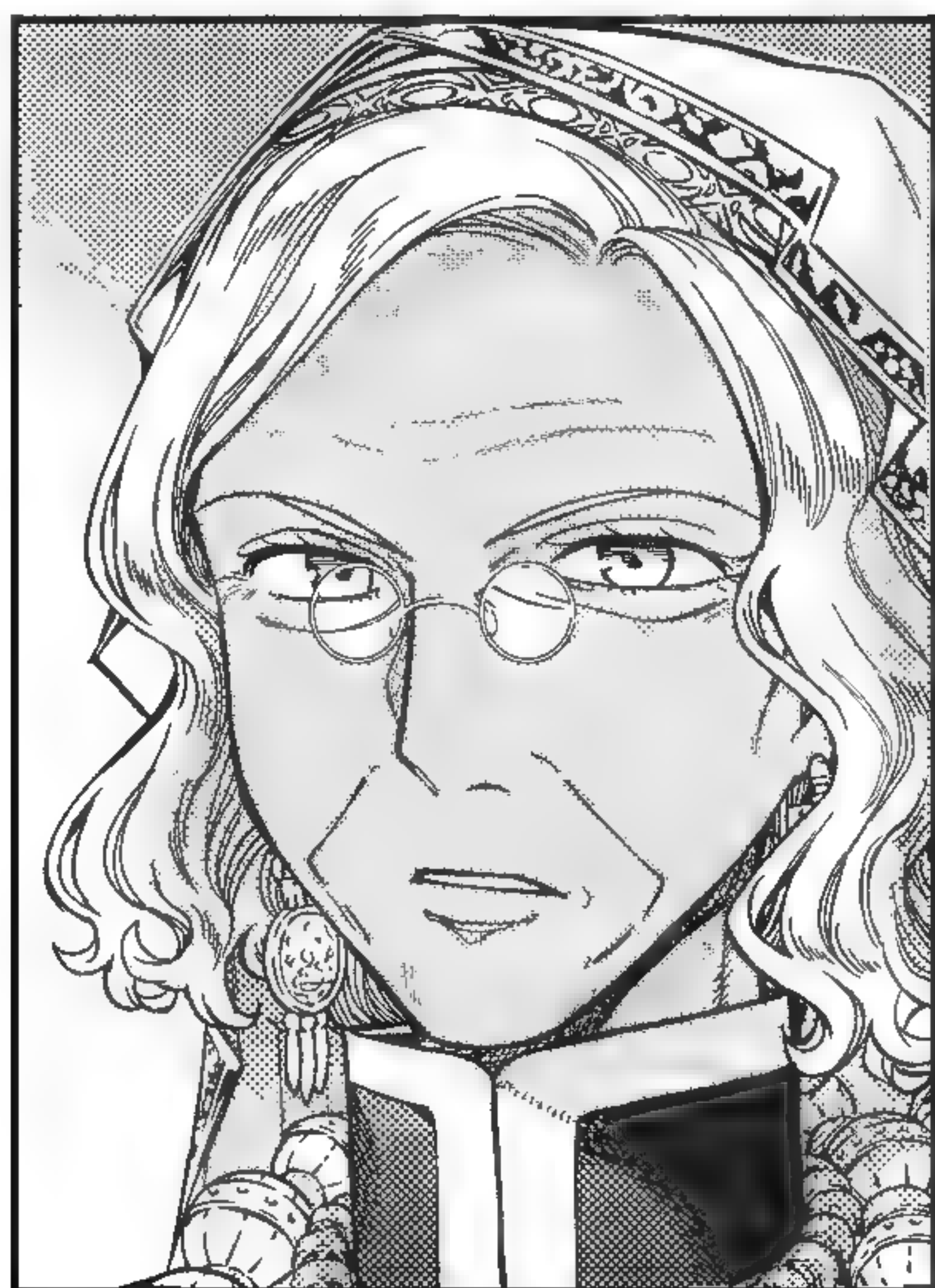
チャ  
チャ

チャ  
チャ

ワイ  
ワイ

ワイ  
ワイ

Which  
did you  
write?



FLICK  
FLICK  
10 10 10  
10 10 10  
10 10 10

?!  
...  
...



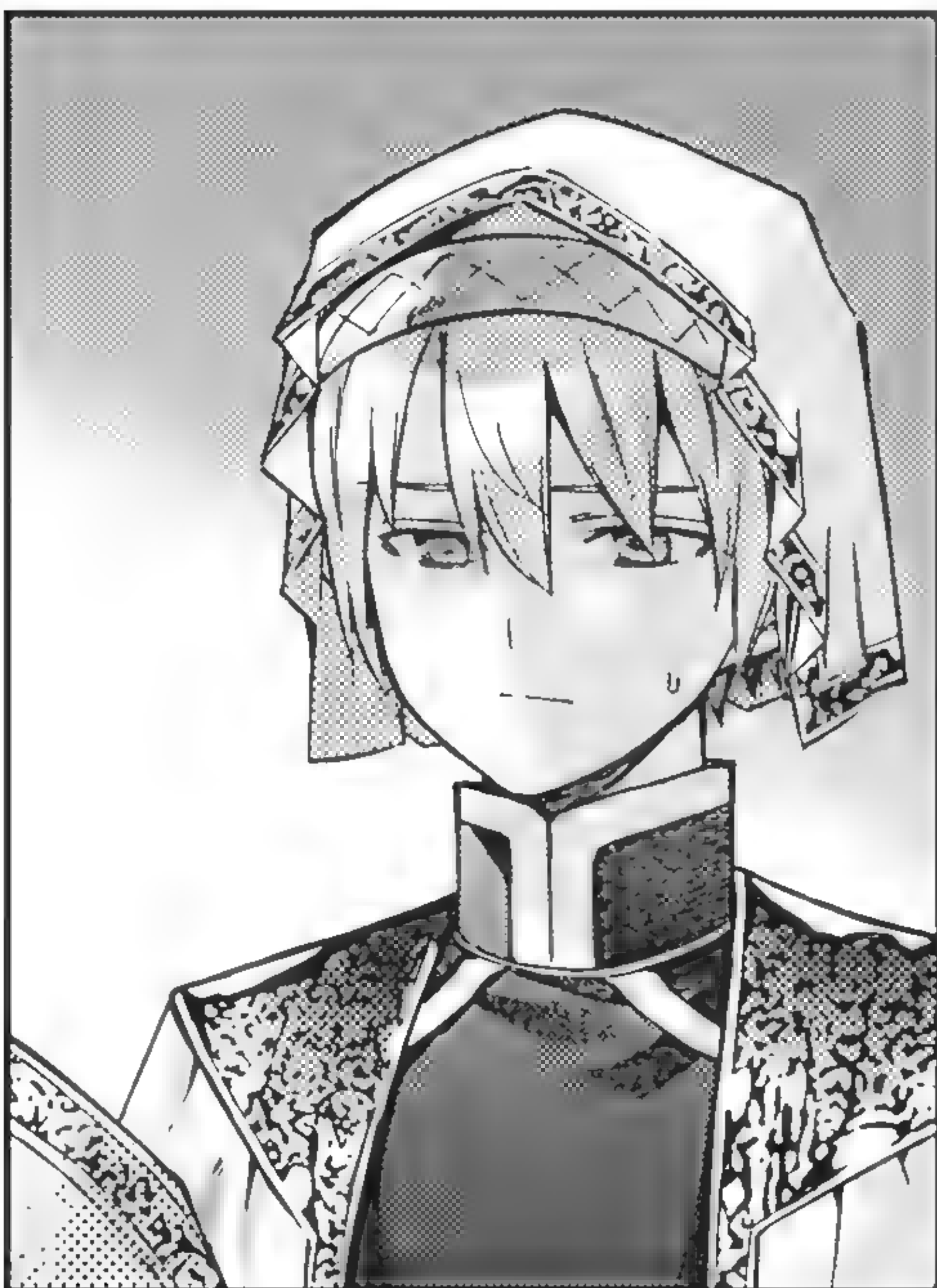
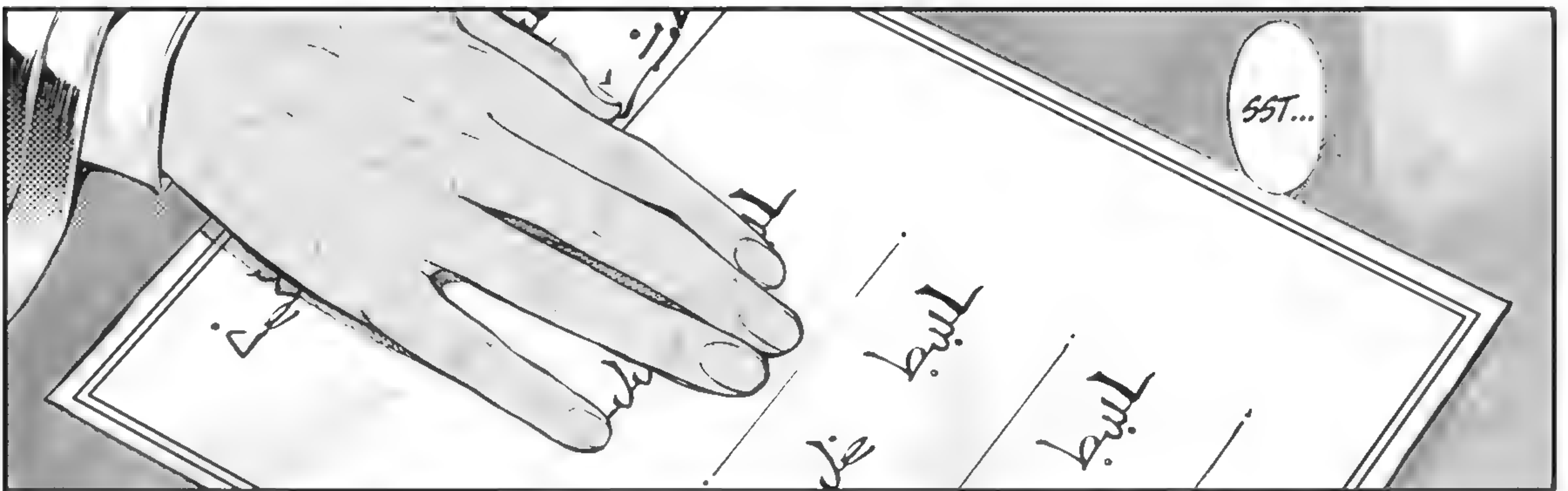
...YES,  
MA'AM.



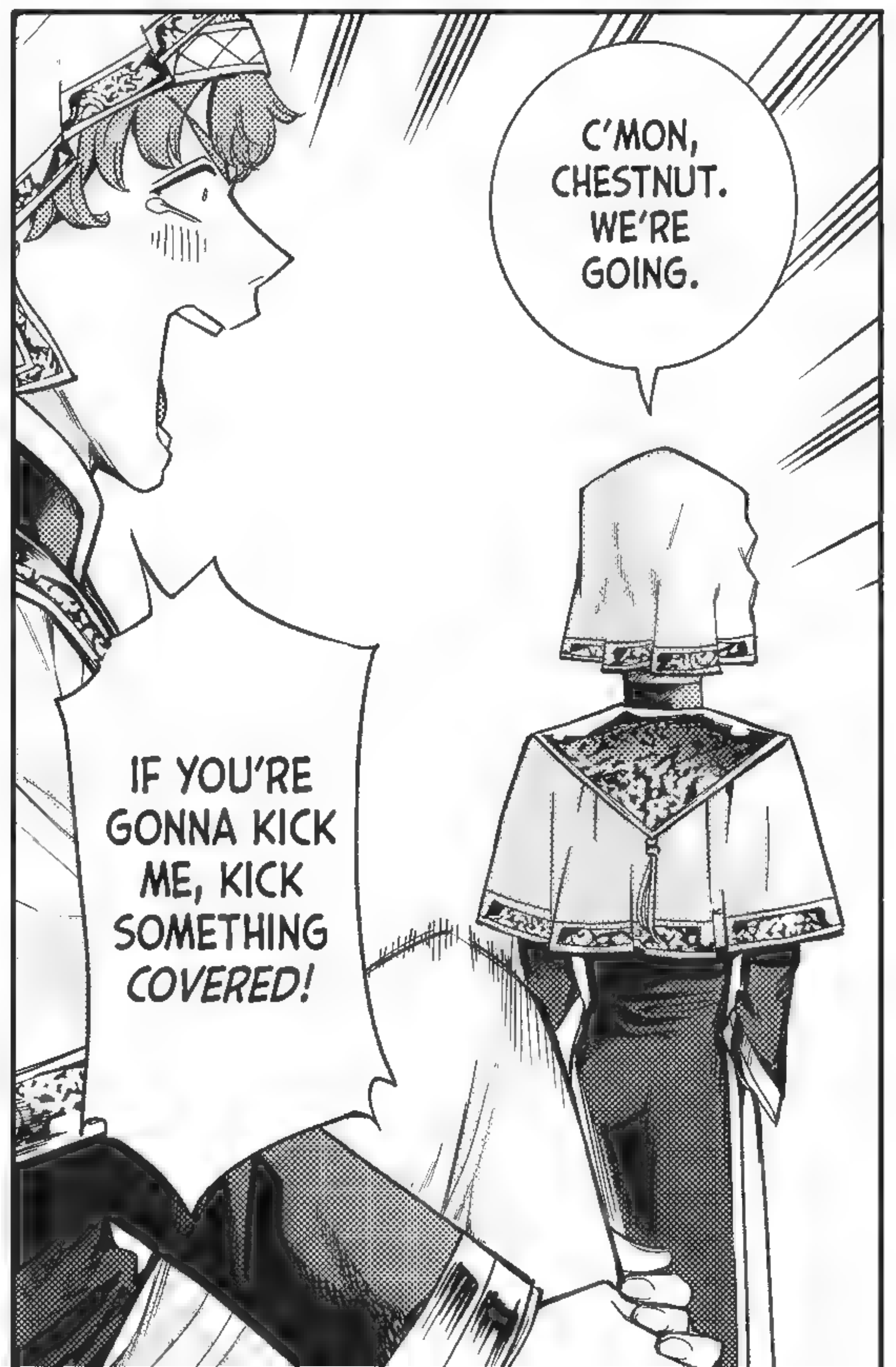
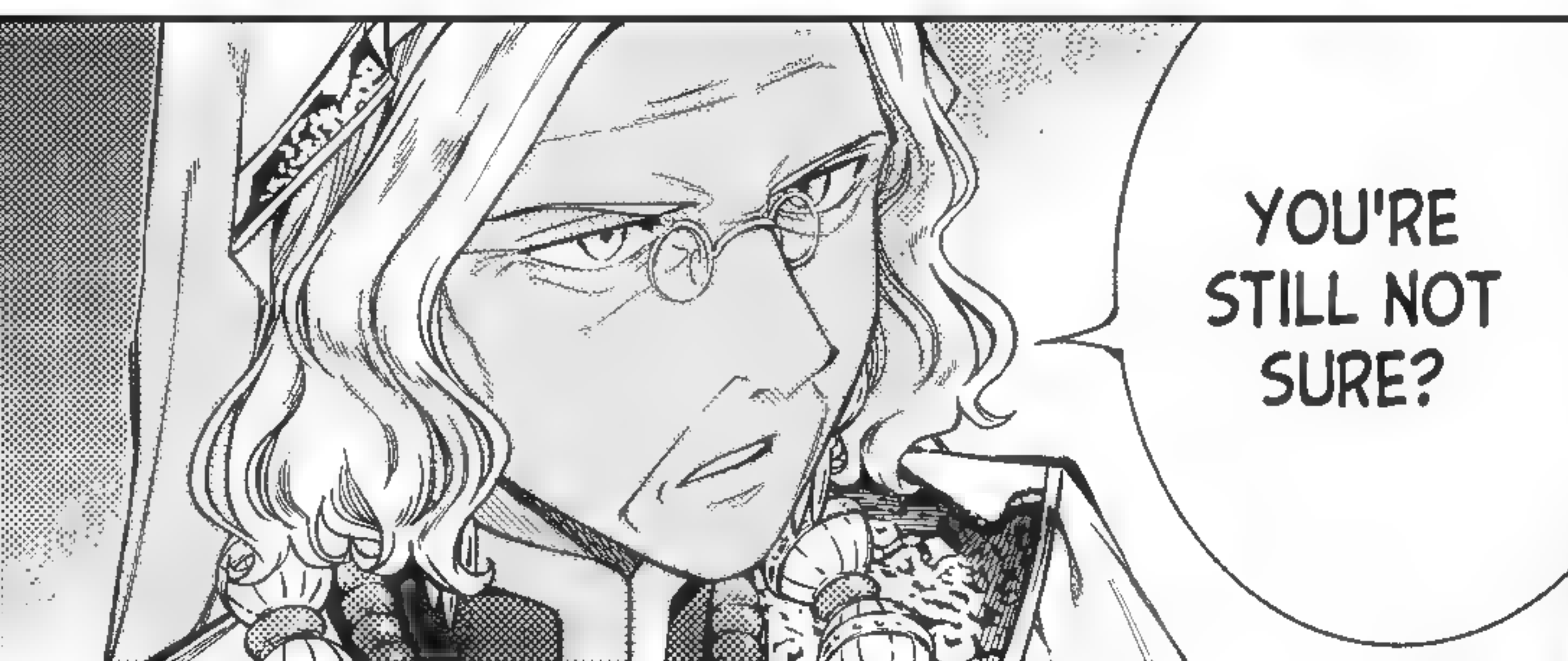
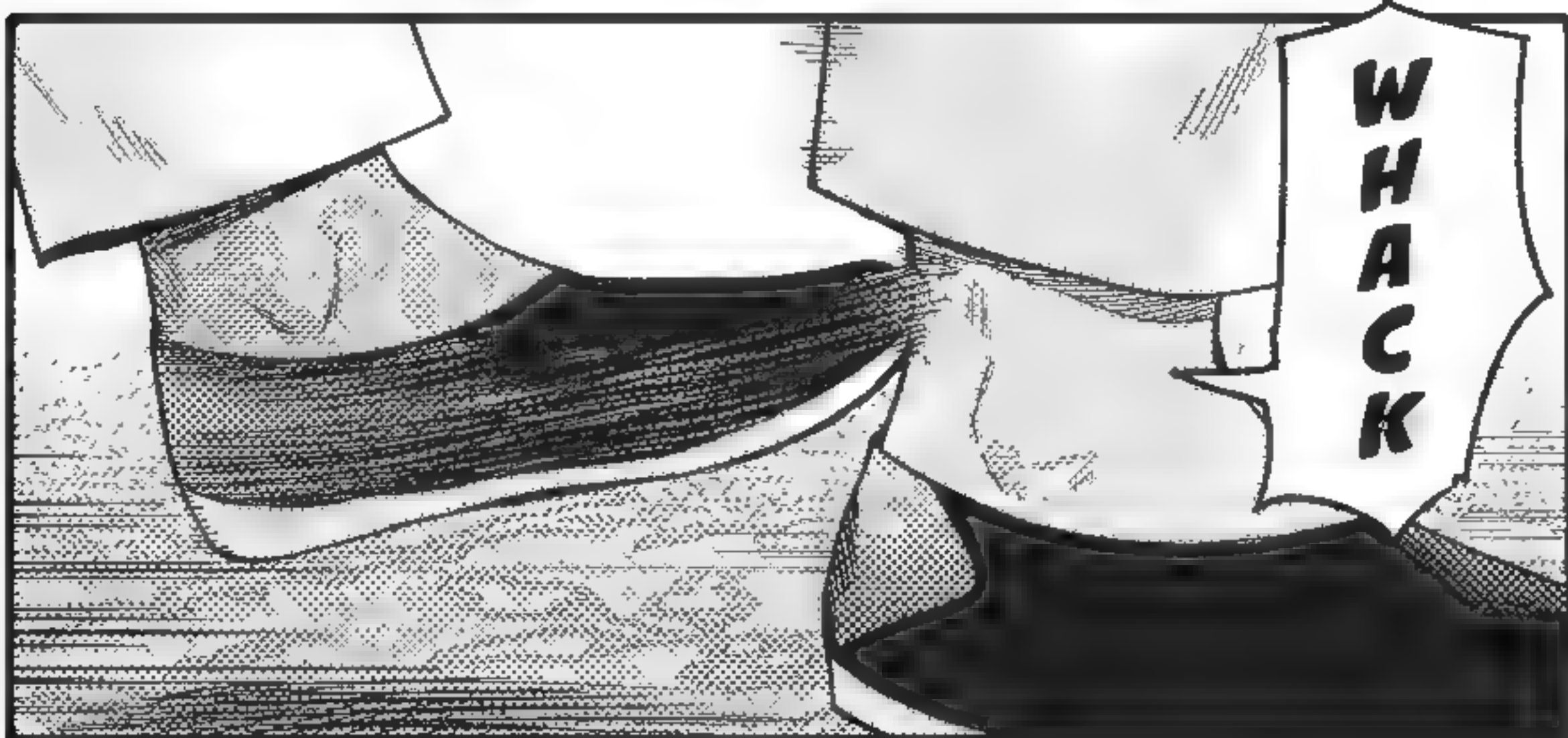
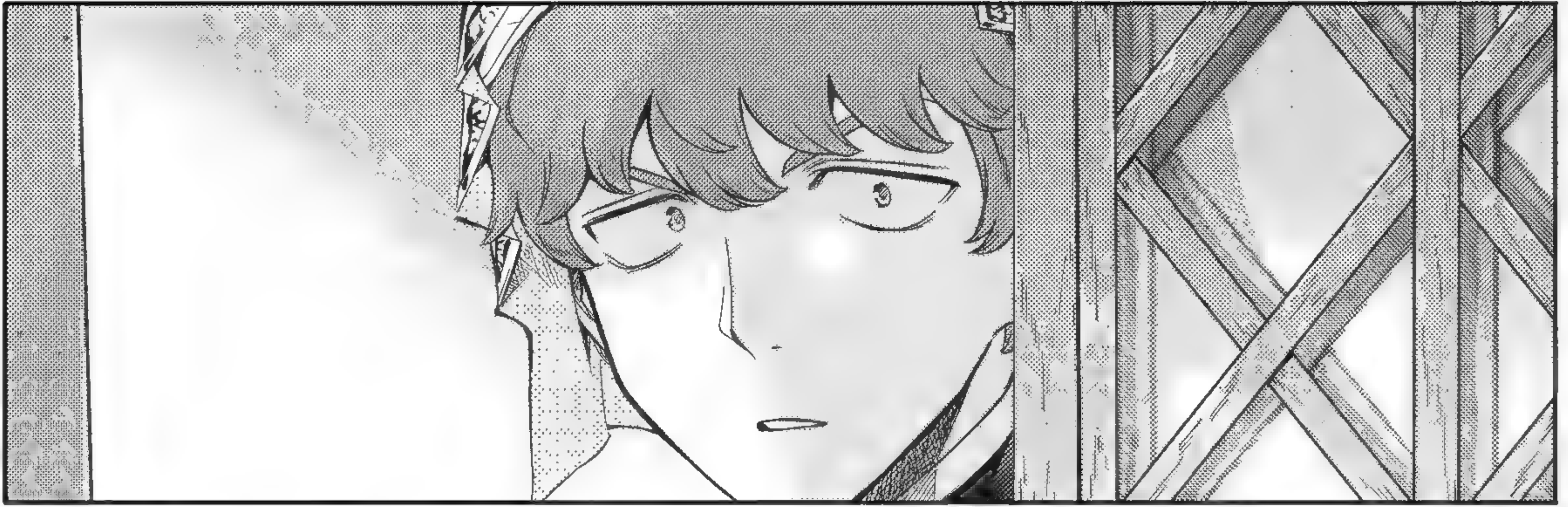
MISTER  
FUMIS.

A WORD,  
PLEASE.













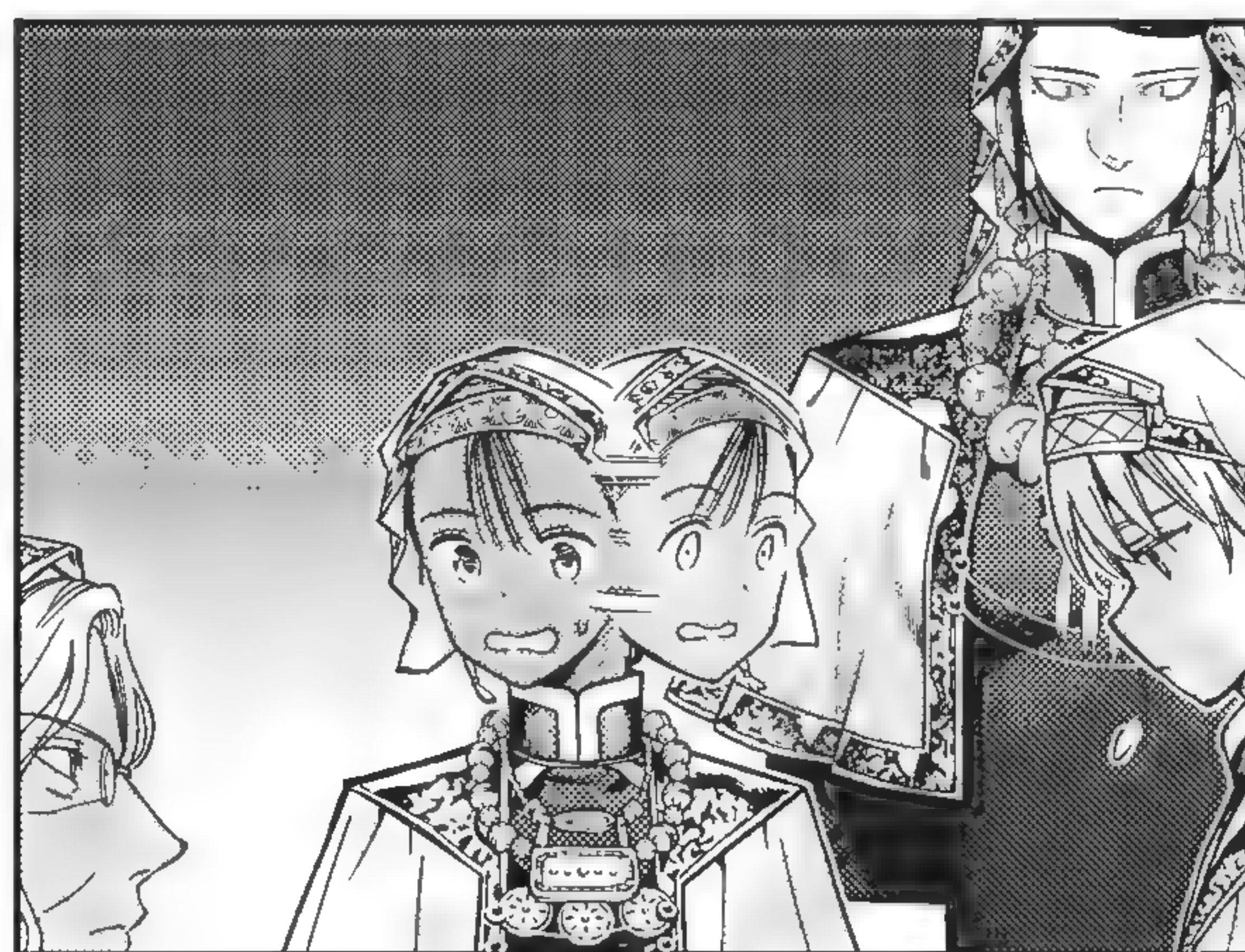
...AS TO WHAT  
KIND OF ADULT  
YOU HOPED  
TO BECOME OR  
WHAT ROLE YOU  
MIGHT FILL?

DO YOU MEAN  
TO TELL ME THAT  
YOU LABORED  
THROUGH ALL YOUR  
PREPARATIONS TO  
PASS THE EXAM  
WITHOUT A *SINGLE*  
THOUGHT...



I BET YOU'RE  
FEELING UPSET  
ABOUT HOW  
THIS MORNING'S  
TEST WENT!

H E E E Y !



IT'S NICE TO  
SEE HOW SHE  
EMPATHIZES  
WITH THEM, BUT  
I WISH SHE'D  
CHOOSE HER  
WORDS MORE  
CAREFULLY...

ERM,  
AIKO...?



IT'S ALL RIGHT!  
DON'T BE SHY!  
MAYBE YOU'VE  
GOT YOUR  
SIGHTS SET ON  
THE GUIDANCE  
OFFICE? OR  
GENERAL  
AFFAIRS?

WRITE IT DOWN!  
...ALTHOUGH, I  
GOTTA ADMIT, IT'S  
PROBABLY TRUE  
THAT SPOTS IN THE  
POPULAR OFFICES  
WILL GET SNAGGED  
BY THE TRAINEES  
WITH THE BEST  
GRADES.



NO.  
THAT'S  
NOT IT.



...



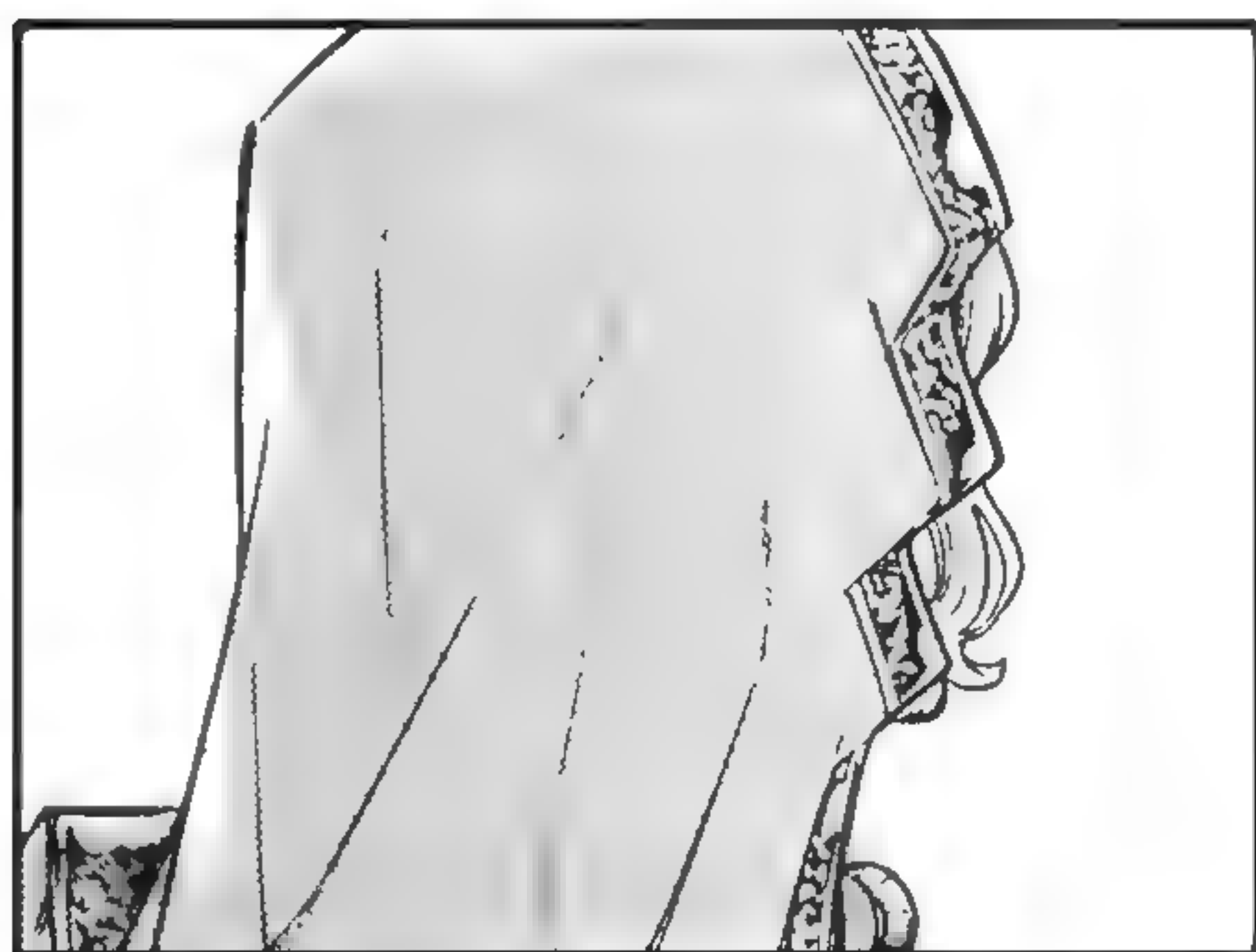
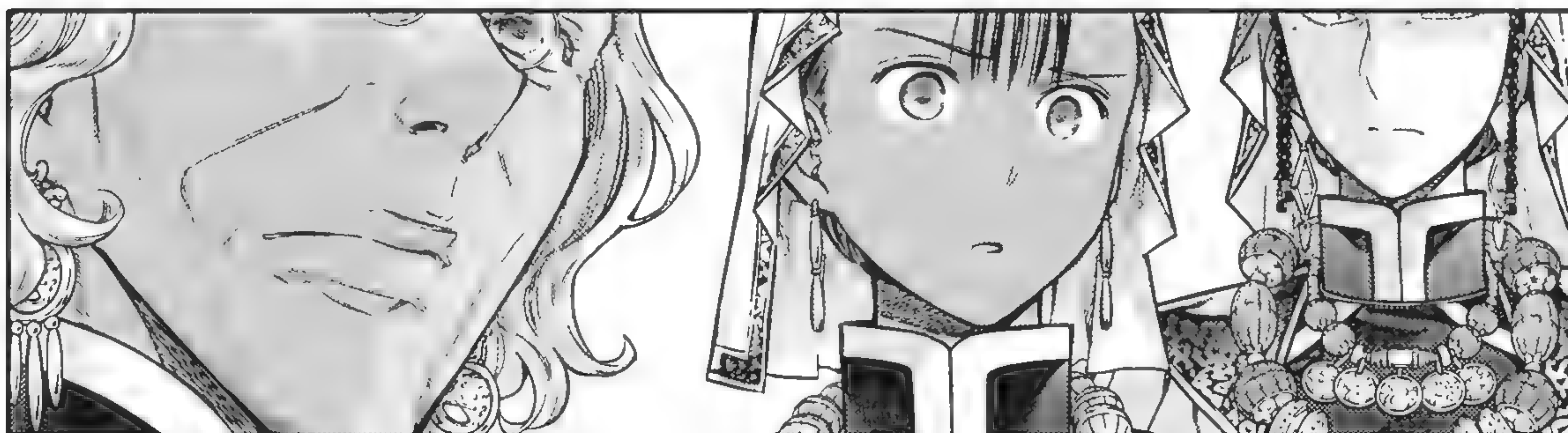


THAT IS WHAT  
HAS ALWAYS  
MOTIVATED  
MY STUDIES.

I...

I WANT  
TO DO  
SOMETHING  
FOR THE  
BOOKS'  
SAKES.

I WANT TO  
GIVE BACK IN  
THANKS FOR  
WHAT THEY'VE  
GIVEN ME.



IT'S HARD  
FOR ME TO  
SEE WHERE  
I'D FIT IN  
AMONG  
THEM.

ALL THE  
OTHER  
TRAINEES ARE  
MUCH MORE  
TALENTED  
THAN ME.

...THE  
MORE I  
REALIZE...

...THAT  
EVERY  
OFFICE IS  
IMPORTANT.  
EVERY ROLE  
IS NEEDED!

BUT THE  
MORE I  
LEARN...



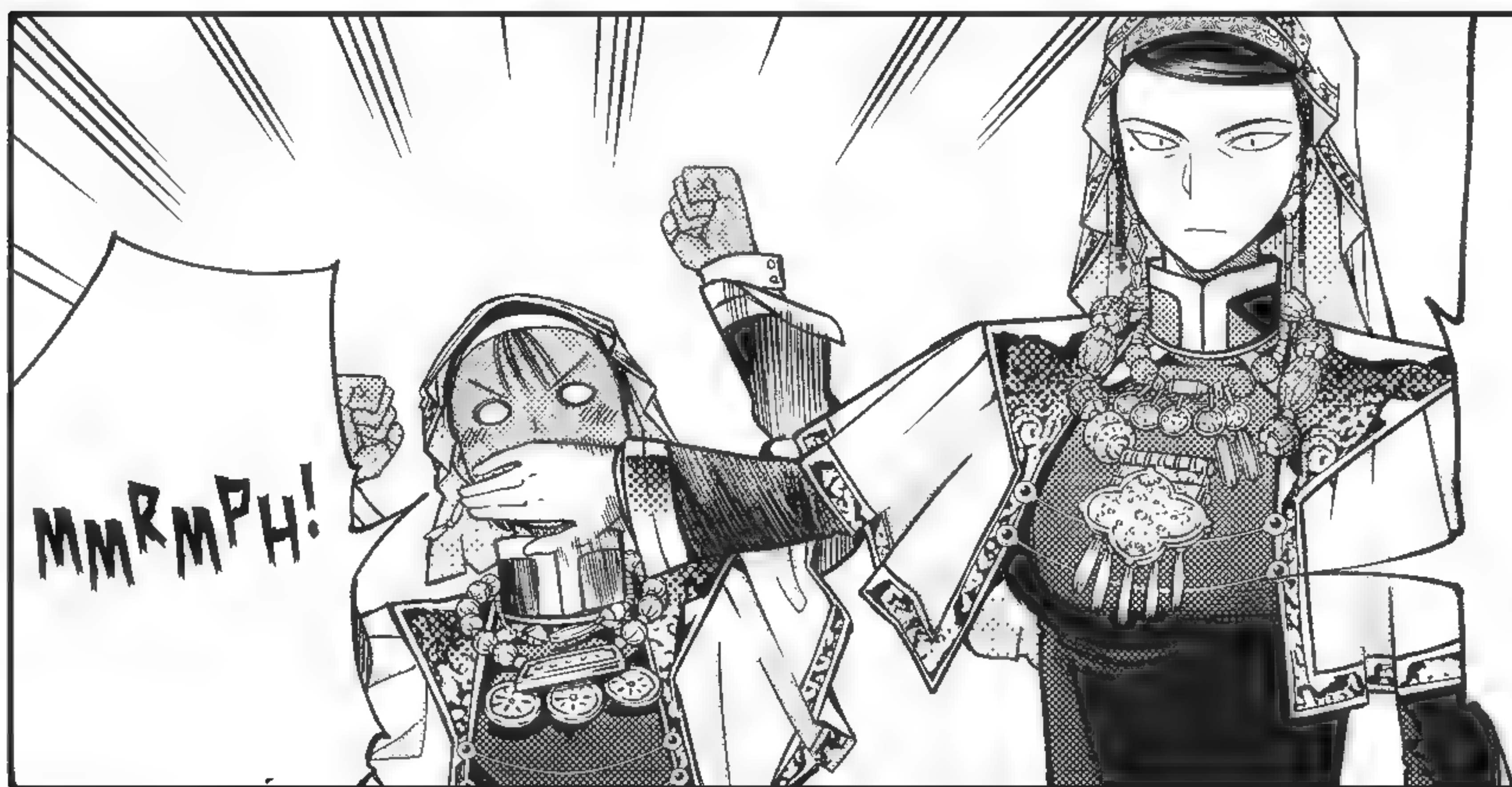
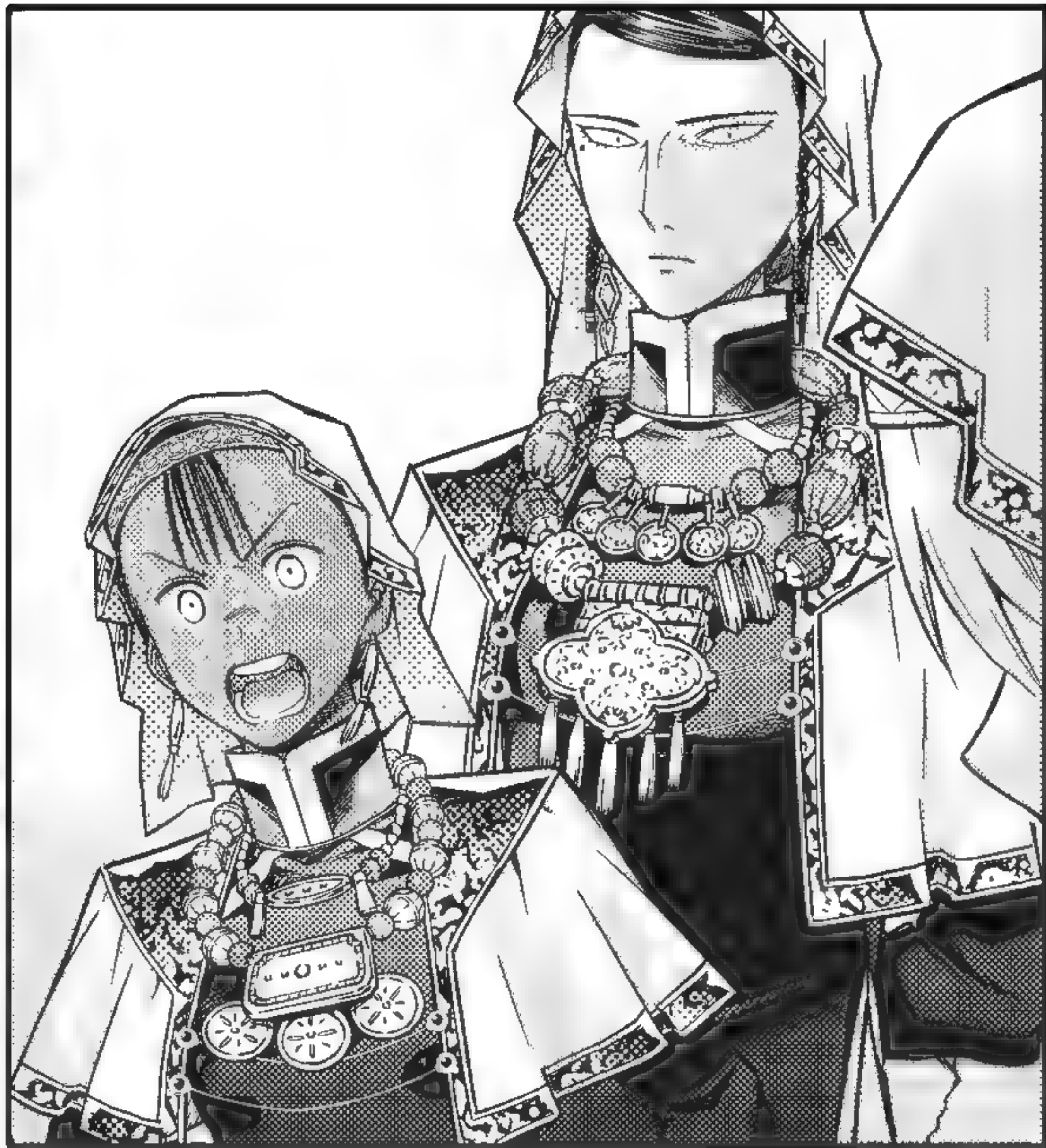


AND  
THAT'S  
WHY...

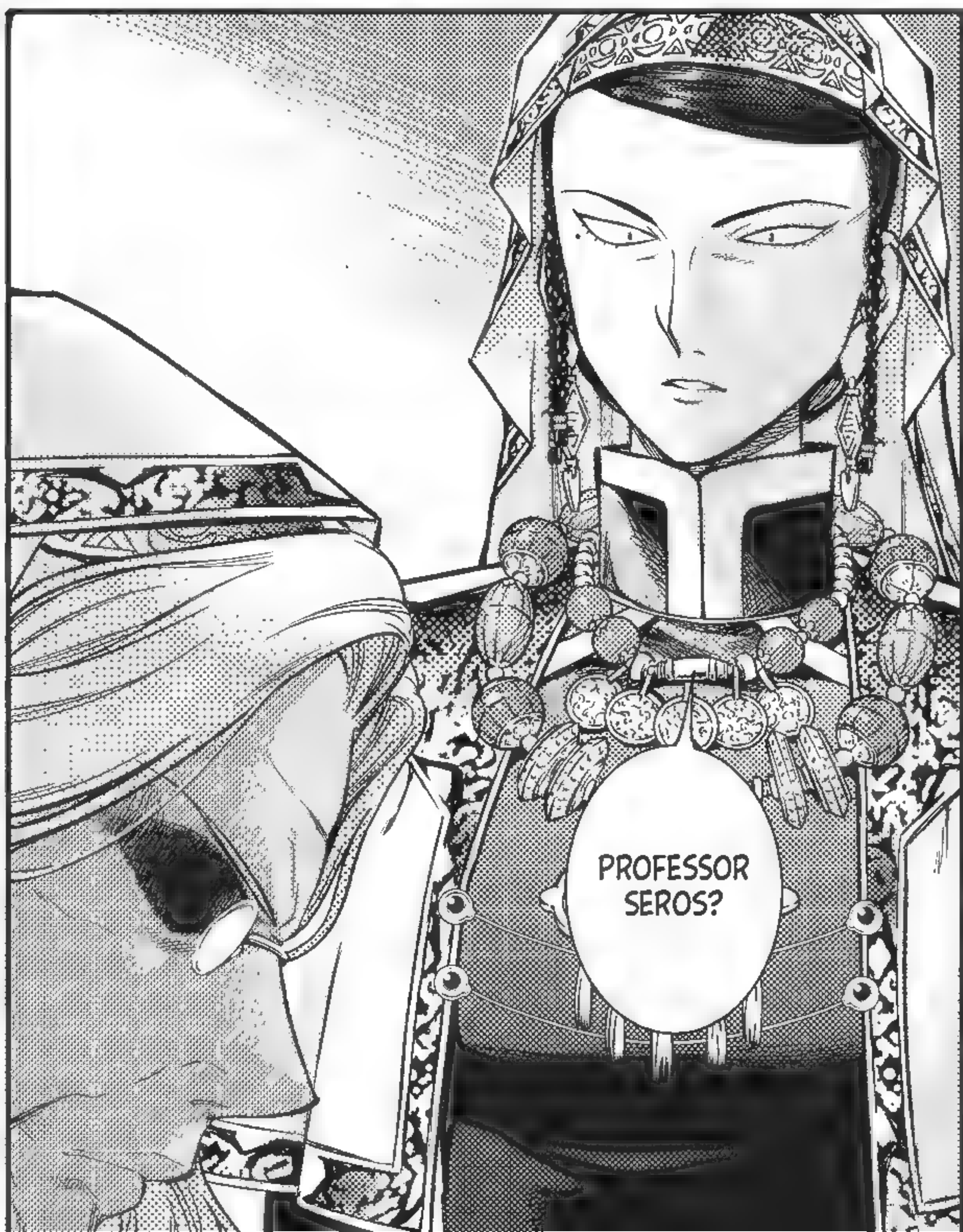
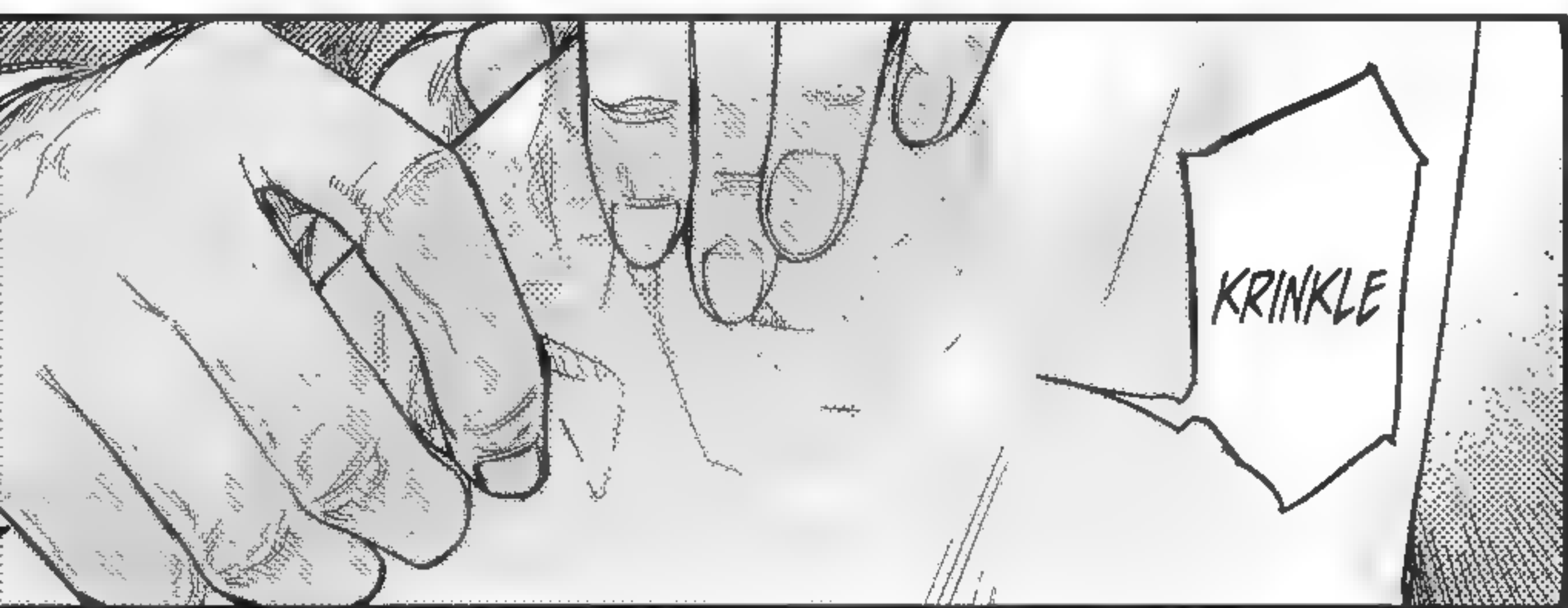
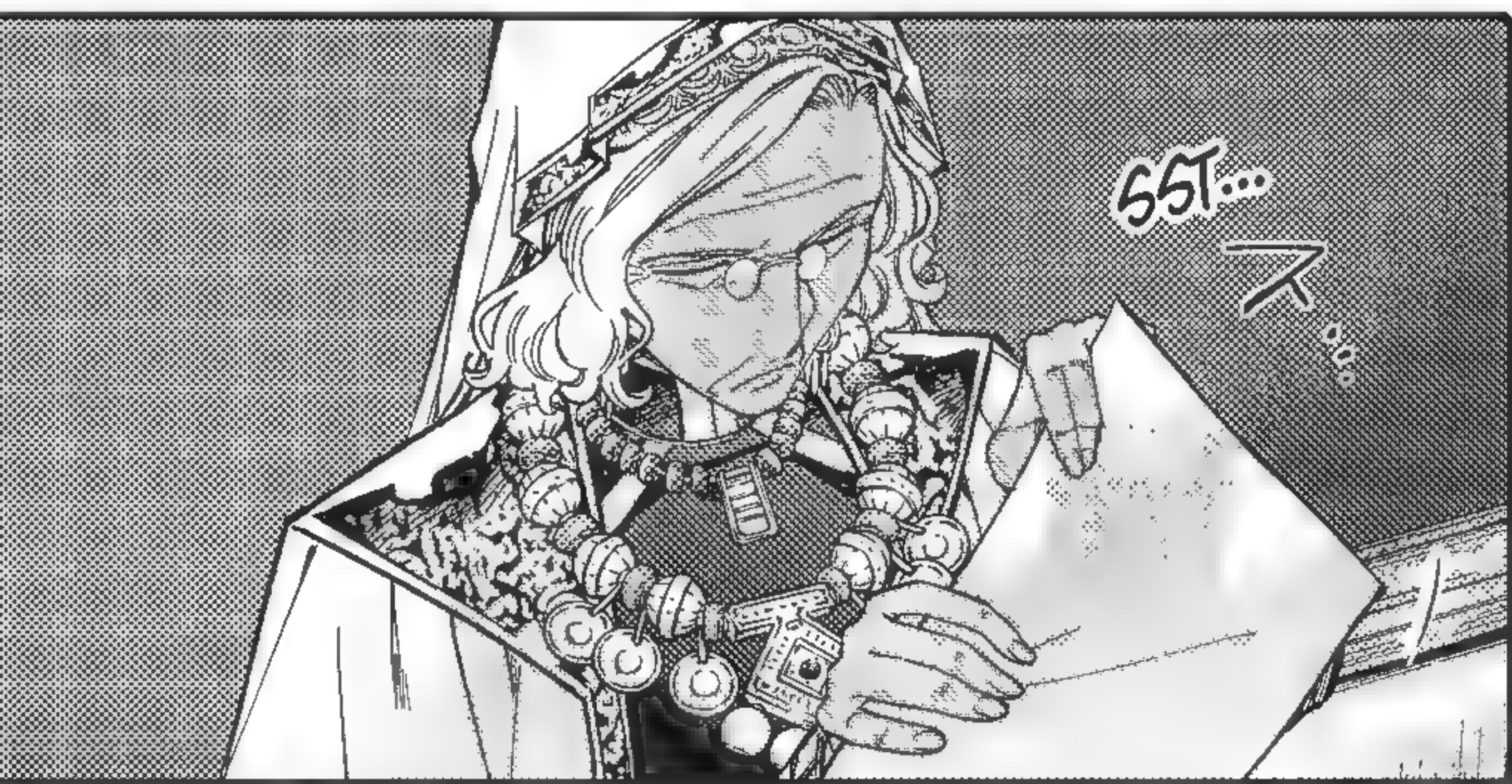
THAT'S WHY  
I DON'T HAVE  
AN OFFICE...  
I DON'T HAVE  
A PLACE...

...THAT I CAN  
RAISE MY HEAD  
HIGH AND SAY  
*THAT'S* WHERE I  
WANT TO LEAVE  
MY MARK.

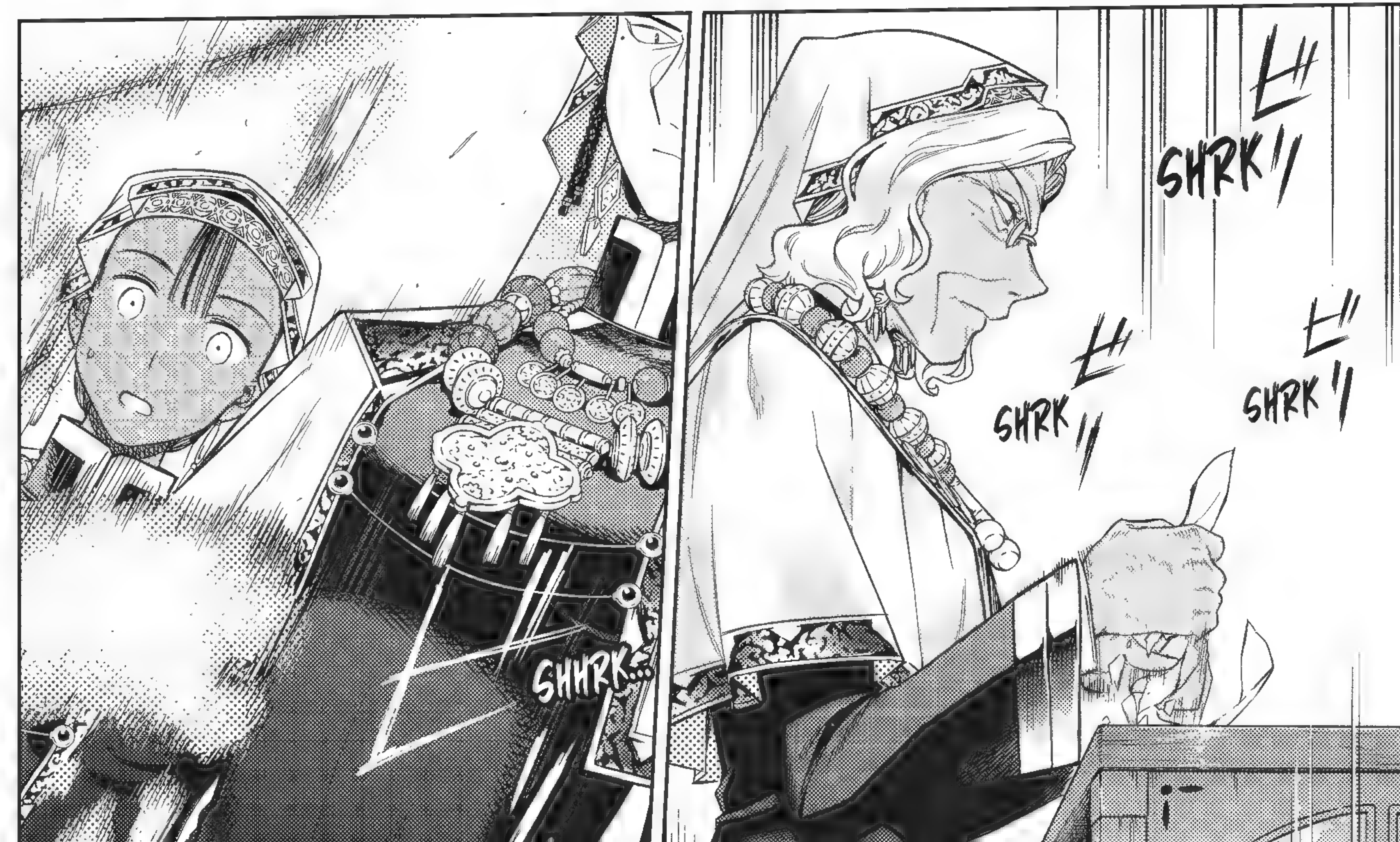
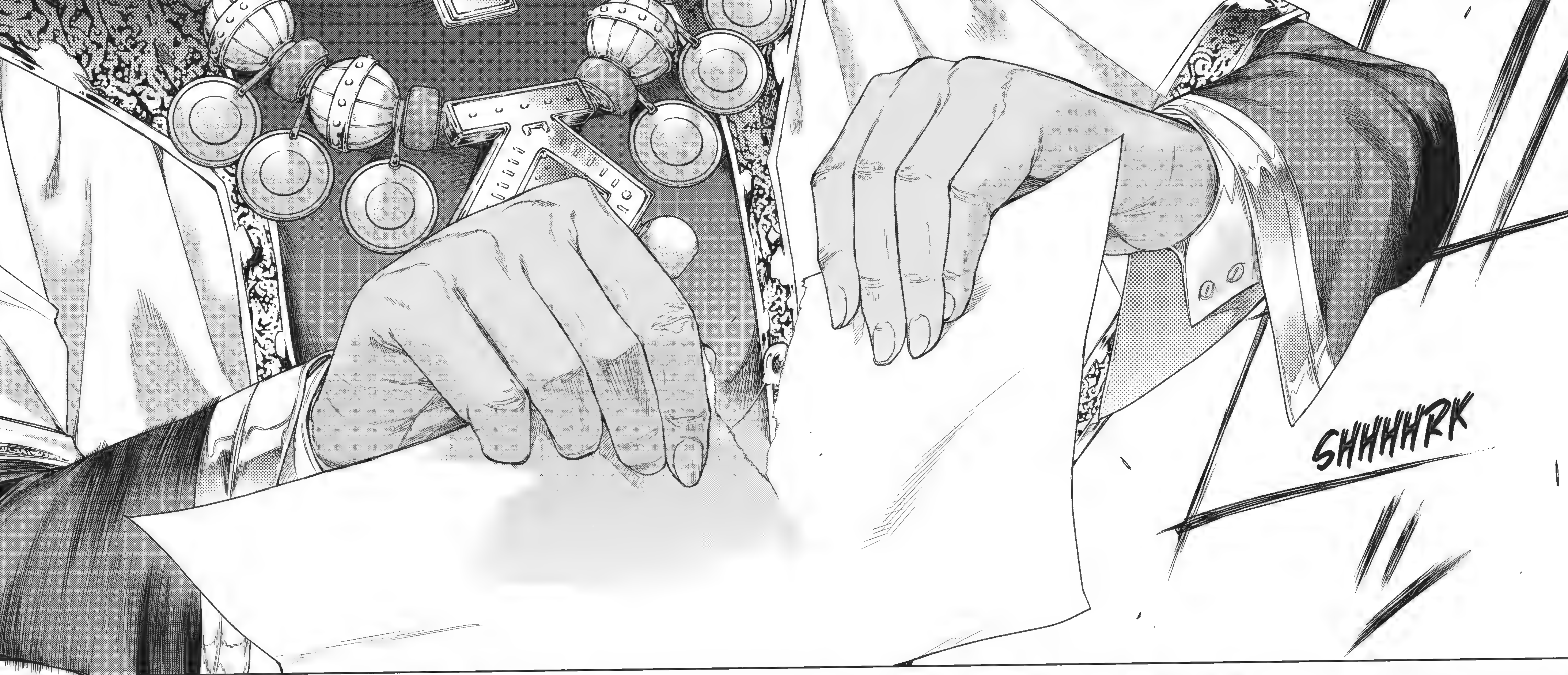




YOU DO REALIZE IT'S JUST A SURVEY, RIGHT? A WAY FOR US TO GET TO KNOW YOU? YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF—











IN YOUR  
CASE, I'M  
SURE ONE  
CHOICE WILL  
BE QUITE  
SUFFICIENT.




DO NOT BE  
MISTAKEN. I AM  
AS INVESTED AS  
ANY OF YOU IN  
YOUR EVENTUAL  
ASSIGNMENTS. I  
OBSERVE, SEEKING  
TO UNDERSTAND  
WHERE EACH  
TRAINEE'S  
STRENGTHS  
LIE.

BUT THE HARSH  
REALITY IS THAT  
SUPPLY AND DEMAND  
FOR ANY GIVEN  
OFFICE RARELY  
ALIGN. NOT ALL  
TRAINEES WILL FIND  
SPACE IN THE OFFICE  
TO WHICH THEY ARE  
MOST SUITED.





ONLY THE  
TOP THREE  
TRAINEES...



TO BE ABLE  
TO FOLLOW  
THE PATH  
OF YOUR  
CHOOSING...


...YOU WILL  
HAVE TO  
EARN THE  
*RIGHT* TO  
DO SO.



EARN  
THE  
RIGHT?

DO YOU  
MEAN...?

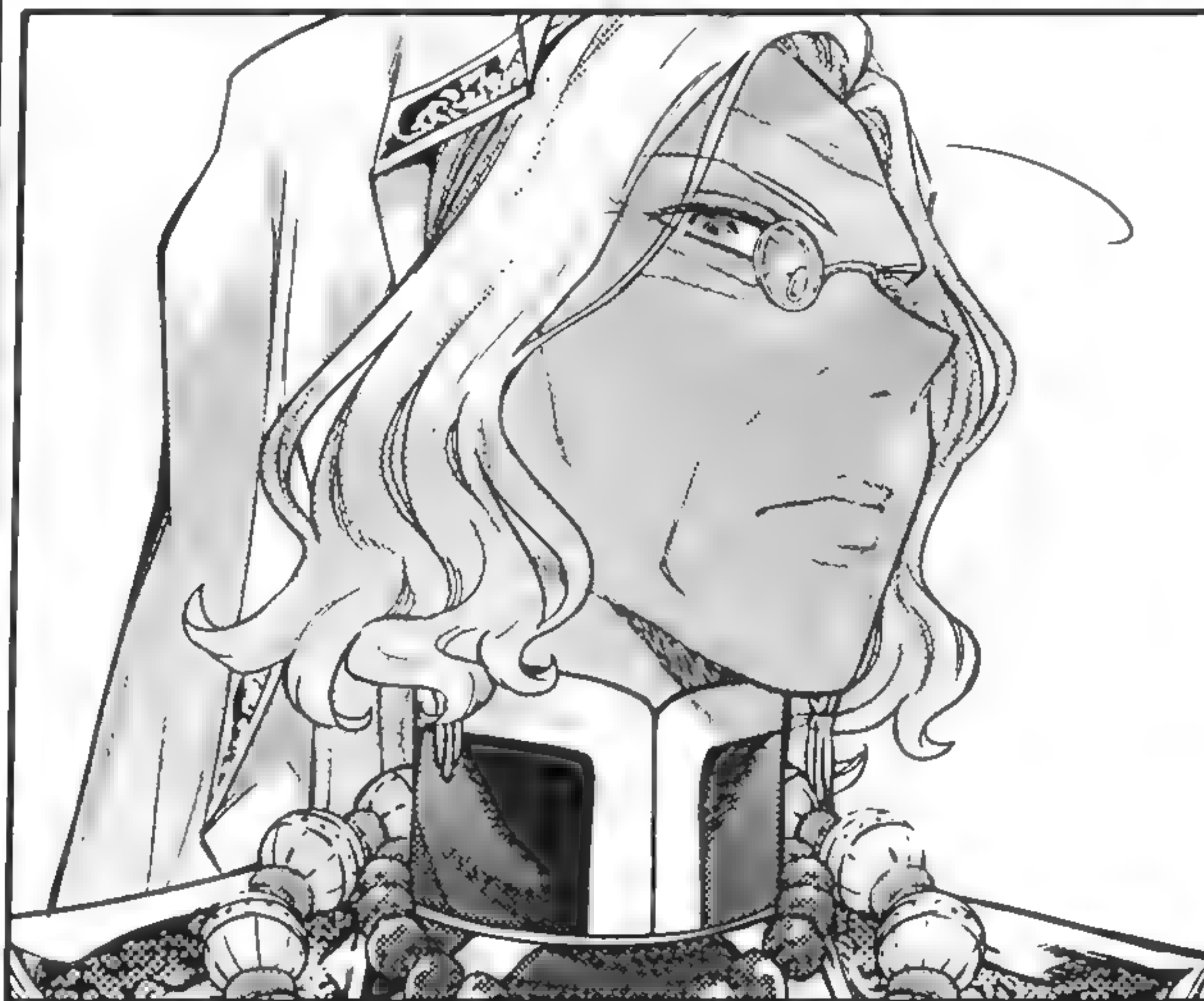
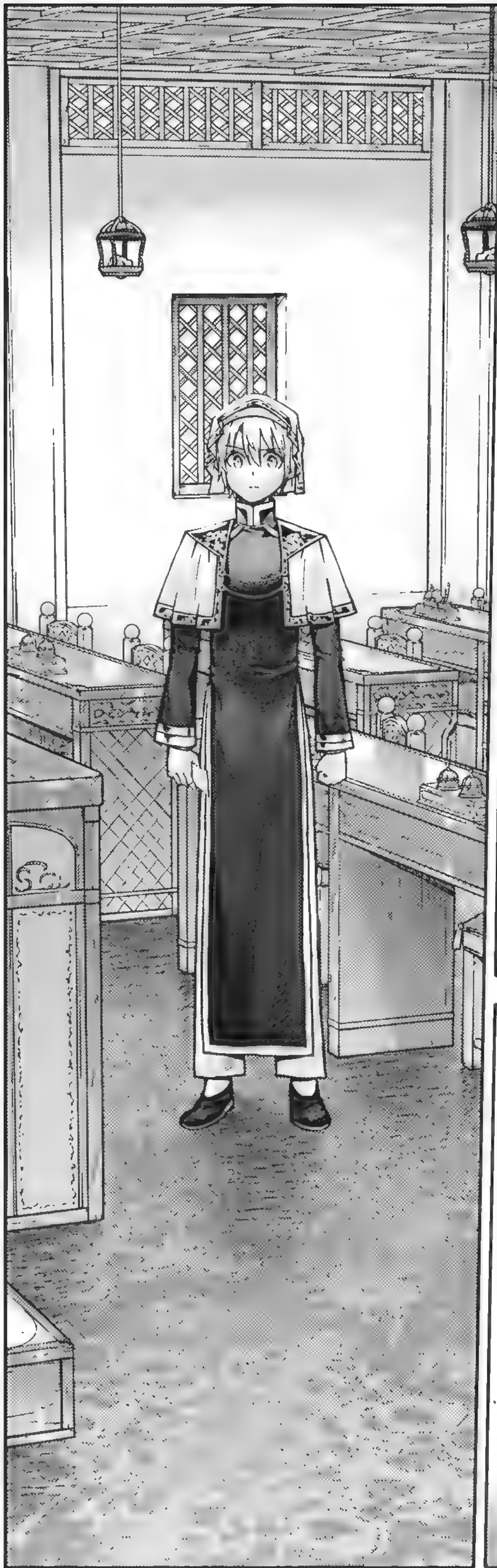
...WILL BE  
GRANTED THE  
CHOICE OF  
WHICH OFFICE  
TO JOIN.



...WE WILL BE  
EVALUATING YOU  
ACROSS ALL YOUR  
CLASSES, TO BE  
ADMINISTERED  
IN TURN BY EACH  
OF THE TWELVE  
OFFICES.

INDEED.  
OVER THE  
COMING  
YEAR...



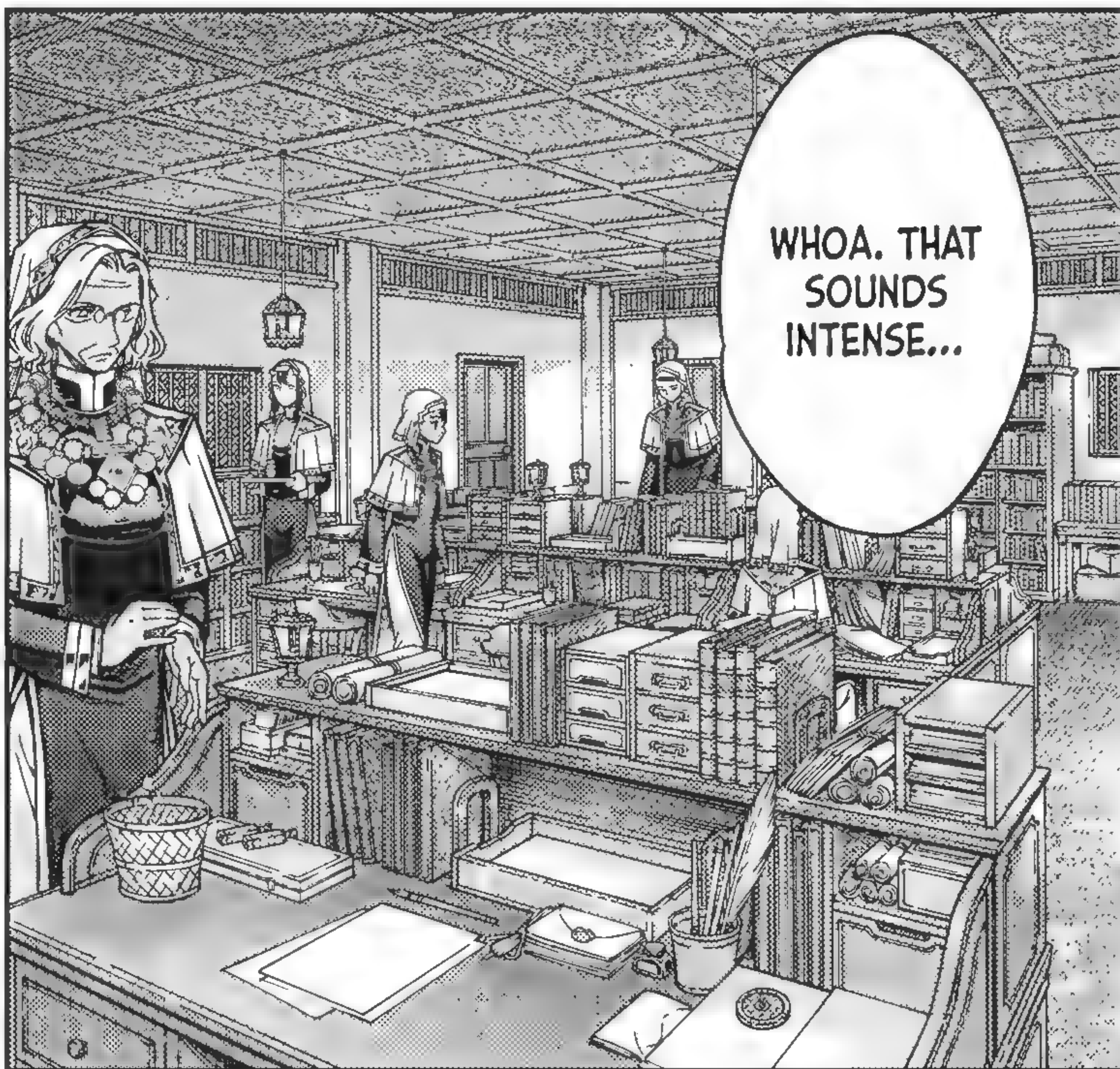






I FEEL FOR HIM, THOUGH. AFTER BOMBING THE VERY FIRST TEST? OF COURSE HE'S GONNA BE A LITTLE SHAKEN UP.

BUT TELLING HIM TO SHOOT FOR THE TOP THREE? THAT'S JUST CRUEL.



WHOA. THAT SOUNDS INTENSE...



HE SEEMS TO TAKE THINGS AWFULLY SERIOUSLY.

BUT IS THAT WHAT'S BEST FOR THEO?

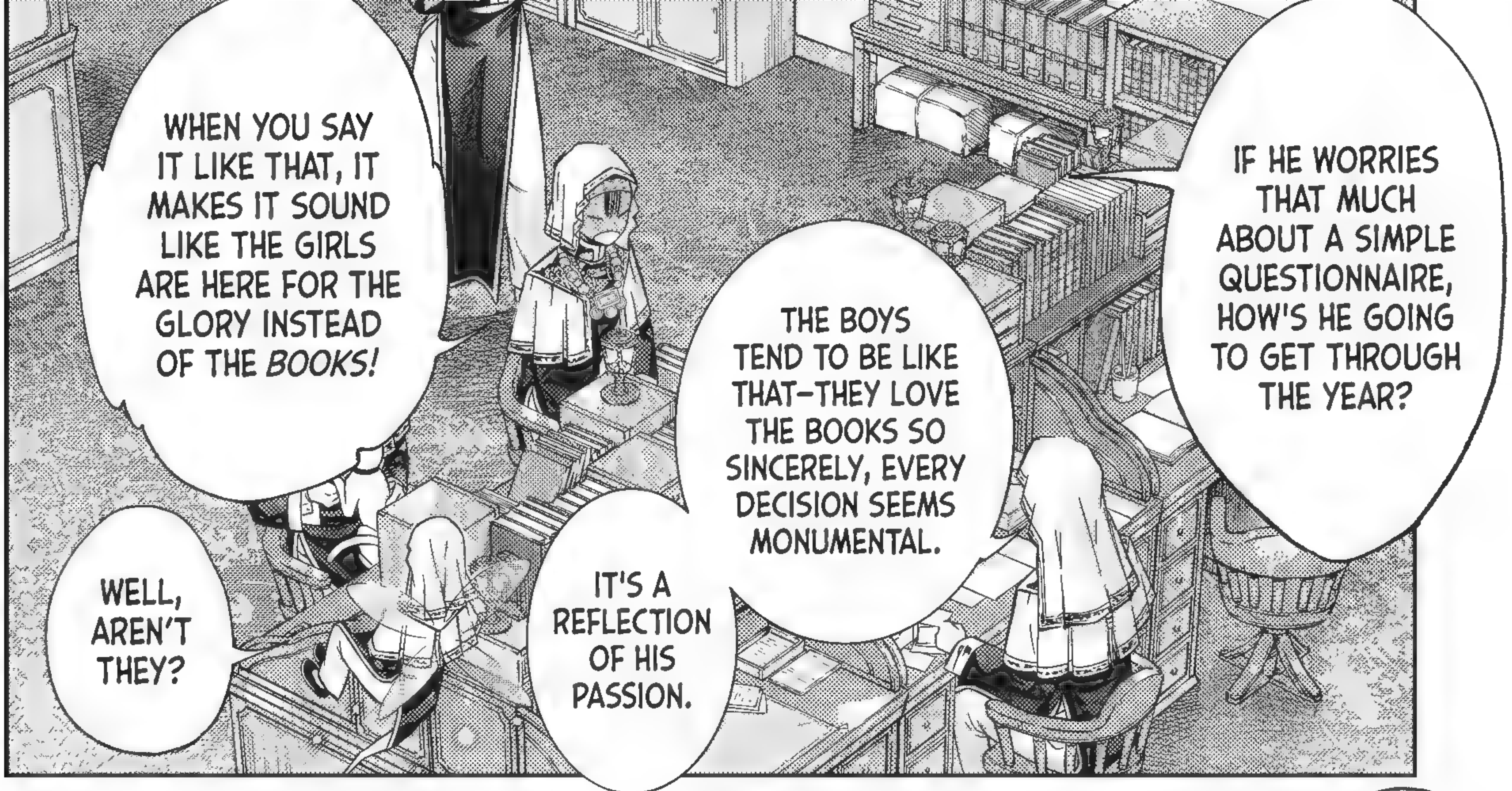


WE NEED TO LEARN AS MUCH AS WE CAN ABOUT EACH TRAINEE, SO THAT WE CAN DECIDE HOW THEY CAN BEST SERVE THE LIBRARY.

WHAT MATTERS IS THE STRUGGLE- AND OUR CHANCE TO LEARN FROM IT.

WHETHER HE SUCCEEDS OR NOT IS BESIDE THE POINT.





WHEN YOU SAY IT LIKE THAT, IT MAKES IT SOUND LIKE THE GIRLS ARE HERE FOR THE GLORY INSTEAD OF THE *BOOKS*!

WELL, AREN'T THEY?

THE BOYS TEND TO BE LIKE THAT—THEY LOVE THE BOOKS SO SINCERELY, EVERY DECISION SEEMS MONUMENTAL.

IT'S A REFLECTION OF HIS PASSION.

IF HE WORRIES THAT MUCH ABOUT A SIMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE, HOW'S HE GOING TO GET THROUGH THE YEAR?



I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. IT'S KINDA DEPRESSING BEING SURROUNDED BY SUCH AMAZING PEERS.

Y'KNOW, BACK HOME, I BELIEVED I WAS SOMETHIN' SPECIAL. A REAL PRODIGY.

I NEVER IMAGINED I'D BE COUNTING UP FROM THE *BOTTOM* OF MY CLASS.

I WAS SO CONVINCED I'D BE ABLE TO SNAG A SPOT IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE.



MOST WILL HAVE TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE OFFICE CHOSEN FOR THEM.

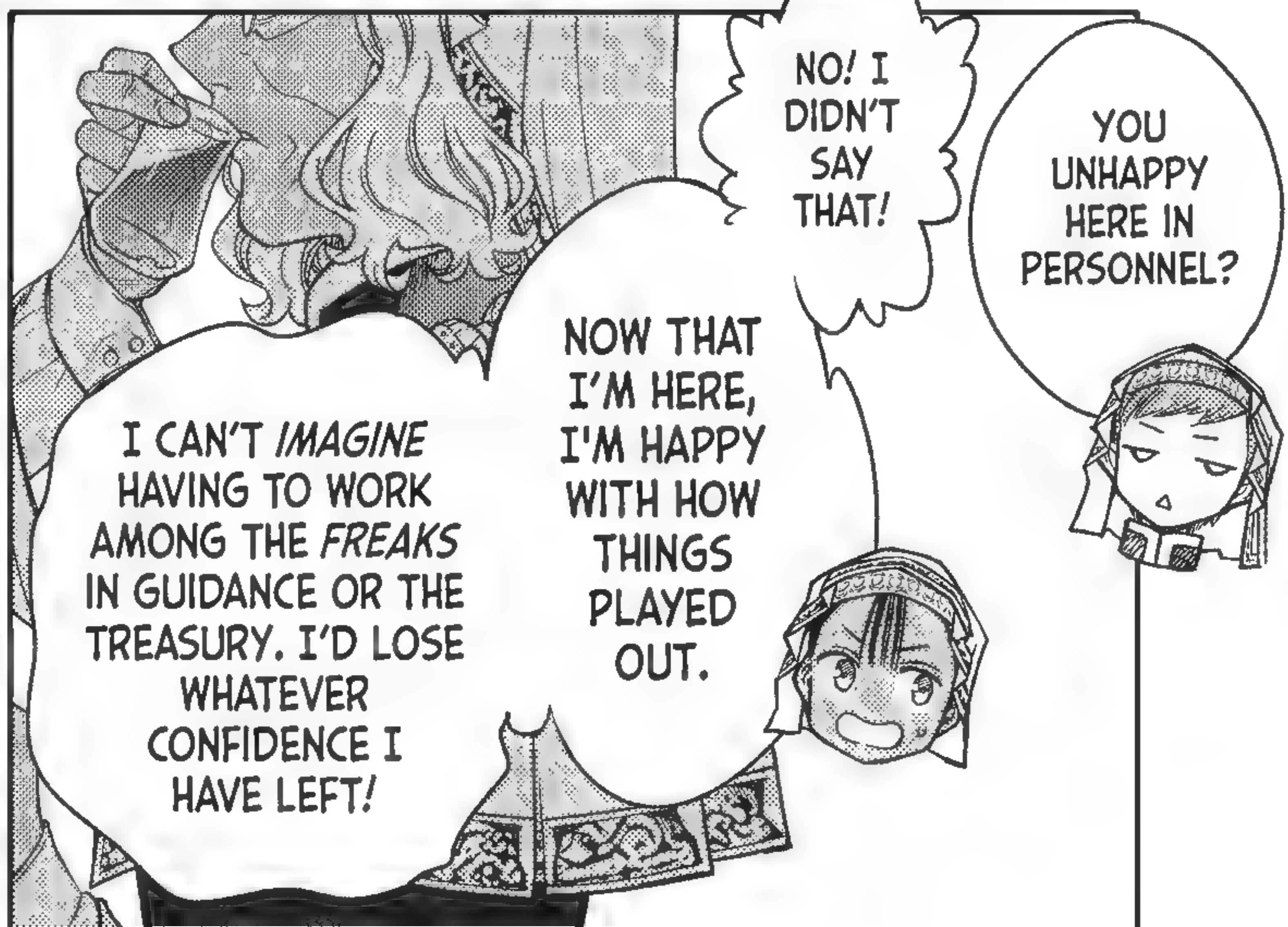
THEO WON'T BE ALONE IN THIS.

SOONER OR LATER, EACH TRAINEE WILL HAVE TO STRUGGLE WITH THE PATH BEFORE THEM.



THERE *WERE* A FEW IN MY CLASS THAT HAD A HARD TIME COMING TO TERMS WITH THEIR ASSIGNMENTS...

STILL...



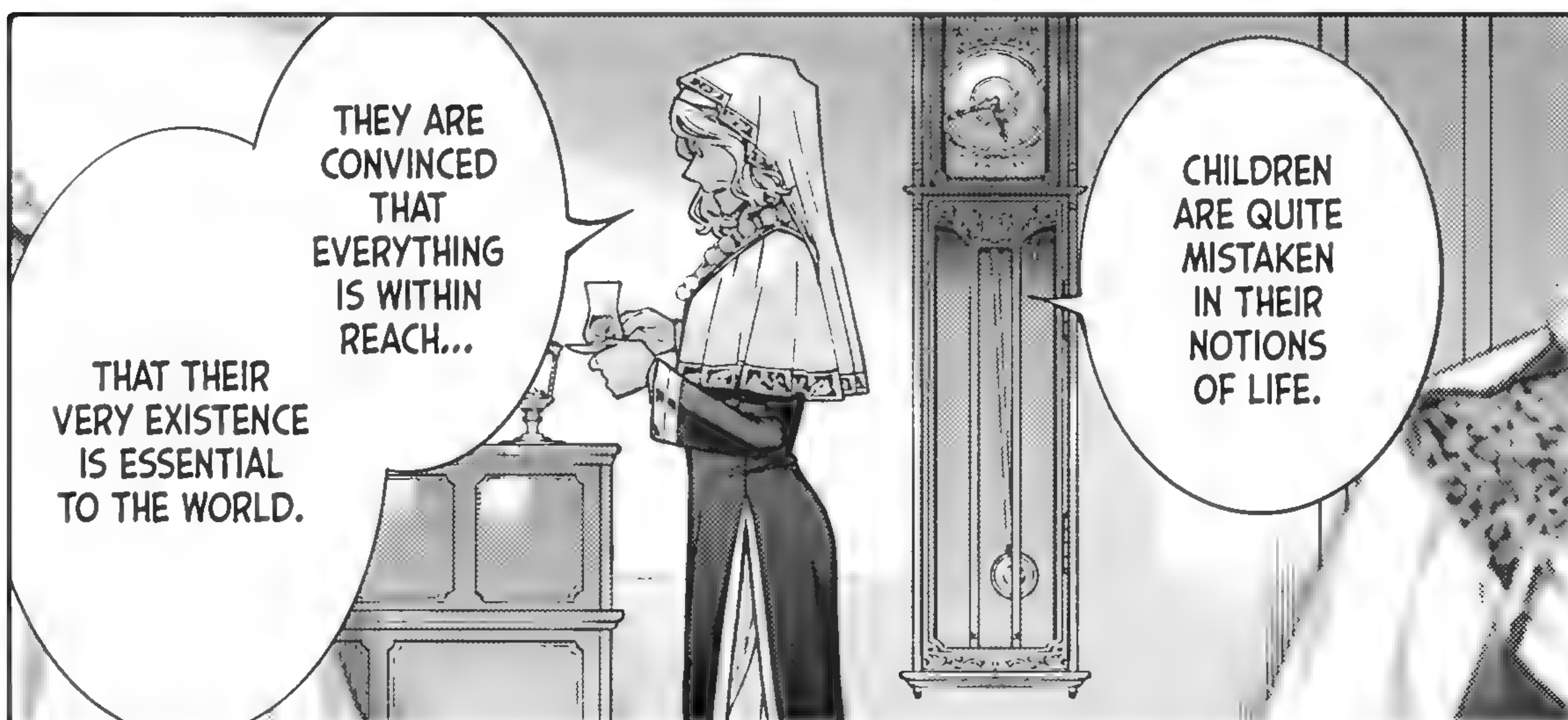
I CAN'T *IMAGINE* HAVING TO WORK AMONG THE *FREAKS* IN GUIDANCE OR THE TREASURY. I'D LOSE WHATEVER CONFIDENCE I HAVE LEFT!

NOW THAT I'M HERE, I'M HAPPY WITH HOW THINGS PLAYED OUT.

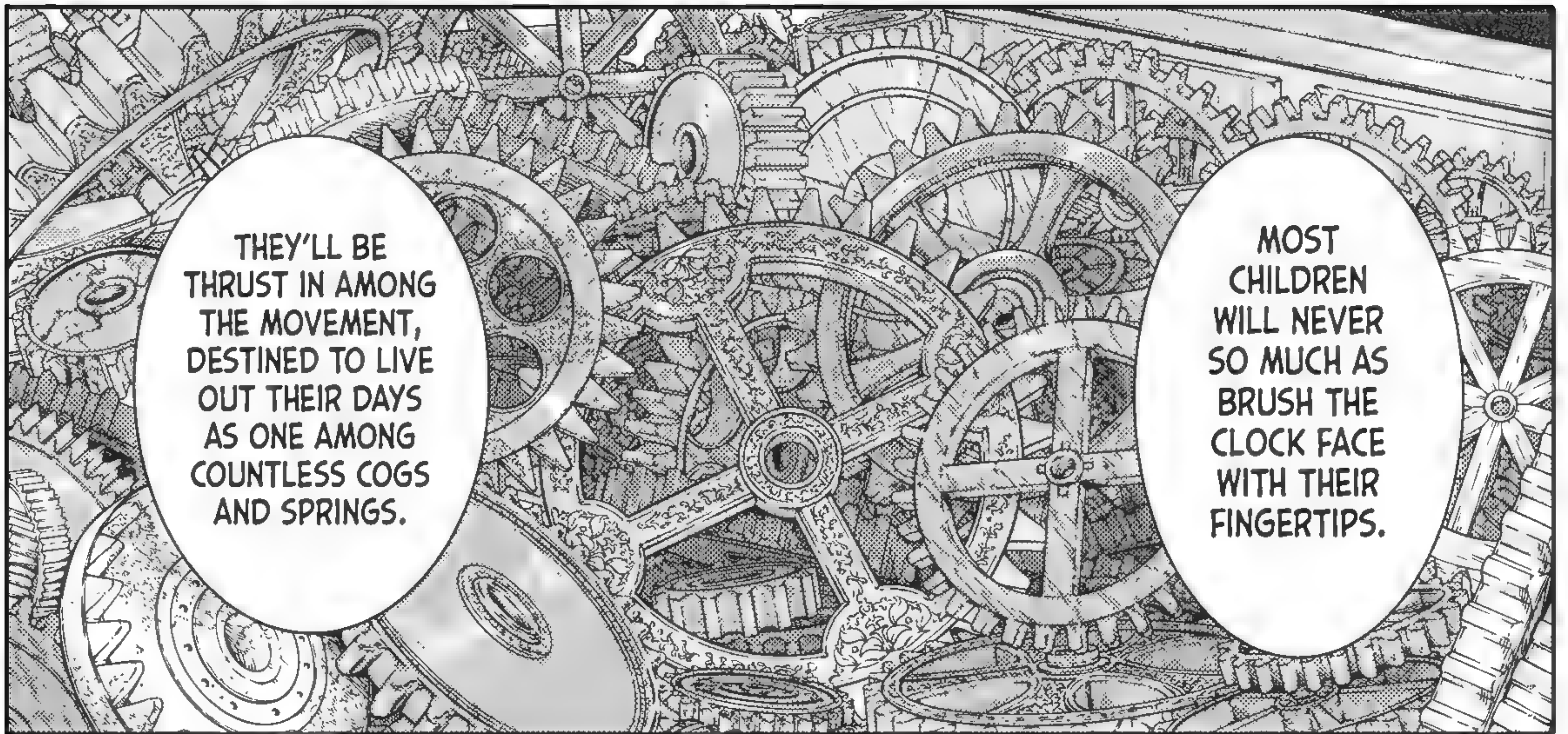
NO! I DIDN'T SAY THAT!

YOU UNHAPPY HERE IN PERSONNEL?



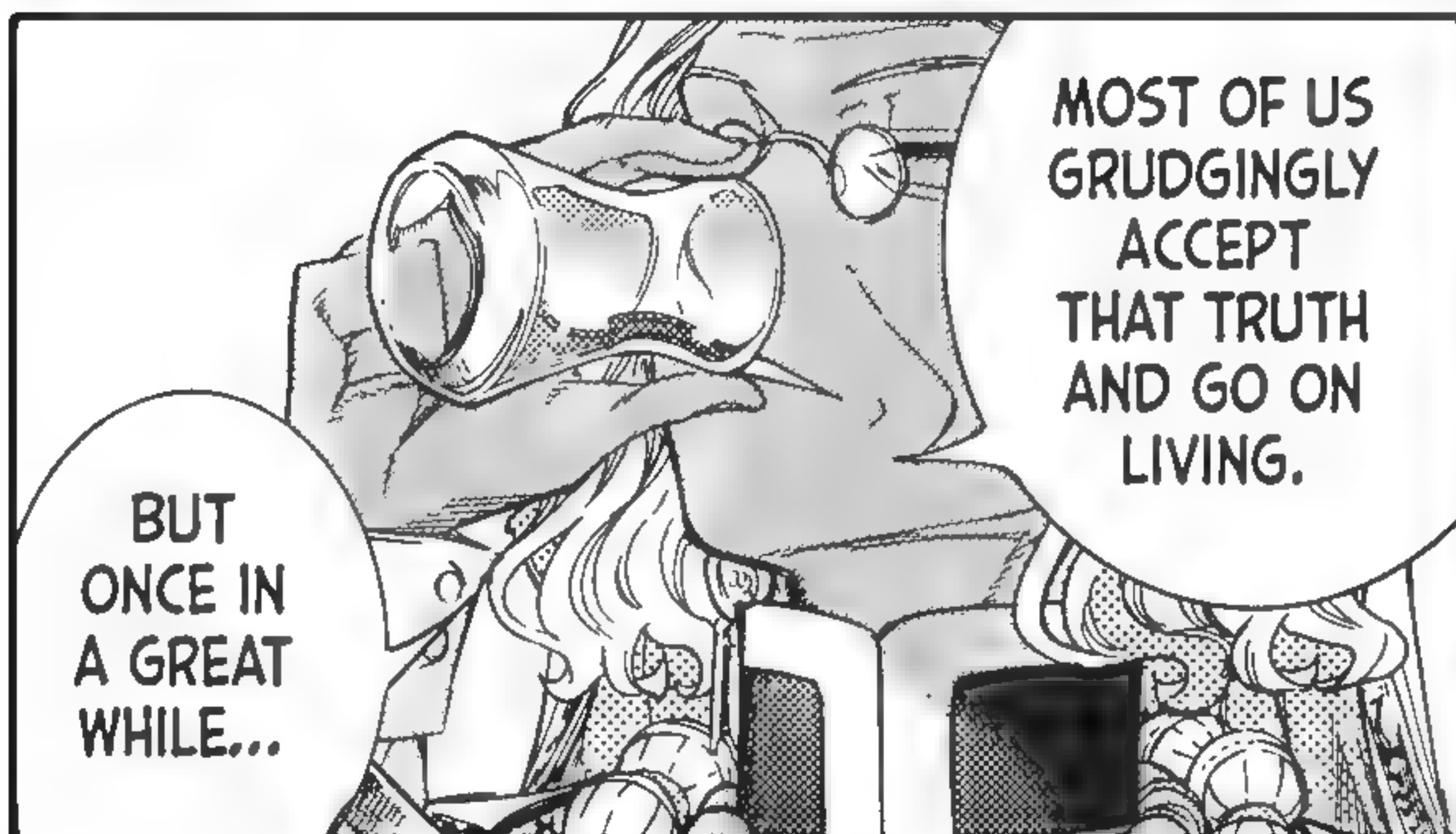






THEY'LL BE  
THRUST IN AMONG  
THE MOVEMENT,  
DESTINED TO LIVE  
OUT THEIR DAYS  
AS ONE AMONG  
COUNTLESS COGS  
AND SPRINGS.

MOST  
CHILDREN  
WILL NEVER  
SO MUCH AS  
BRUSH THE  
CLOCK FACE  
WITH THEIR  
FINGERTIPS.



BUT  
ONCE IN  
A GREAT  
WHILE...

MOST OF US  
GRUDGINGLY  
ACCEPT  
THAT TRUTH  
AND GO ON  
LIVING.



...THERE  
WILL BE  
ONE WHO  
STRUGGLES  
AGAINST  
IT.



EACH CHILD  
REALIZES  
THIS TRUTH  
SOON  
ENOUGH.

THEY LEARN  
THE LIMITS  
OF THEIR  
ABILITIES.

THAT THEY  
ARE BUT  
A SINGLE  
DROP IN OUR  
WORLD'S  
SEA OF  
MEDIOCRITY.



HE COULD  
TRAVEL TO THE  
ENDS OF THE  
WORLD AND  
STILL...

...HIS FINGERS  
WOULD TWITCH  
WITH THE  
INCESSANT TICK  
THAT TELLS HIM  
THE HANDS ARE  
HIS TO TURN.

HE KNOWS.  
HE *FEELS*  
IT.





... WAS JUST  
THE PIECE  
NEEDED...

AND HE FINDS  
THAT HIS COG,  
THOUGH SMALL  
AND SIMPLE IT  
MAY APPEAR...

... TO CAUSE  
THE FROZEN  
HANDS OF THE  
AGES TO TURN  
ONCE MORE.

K  
E  
R  
S  
H  
N  
K

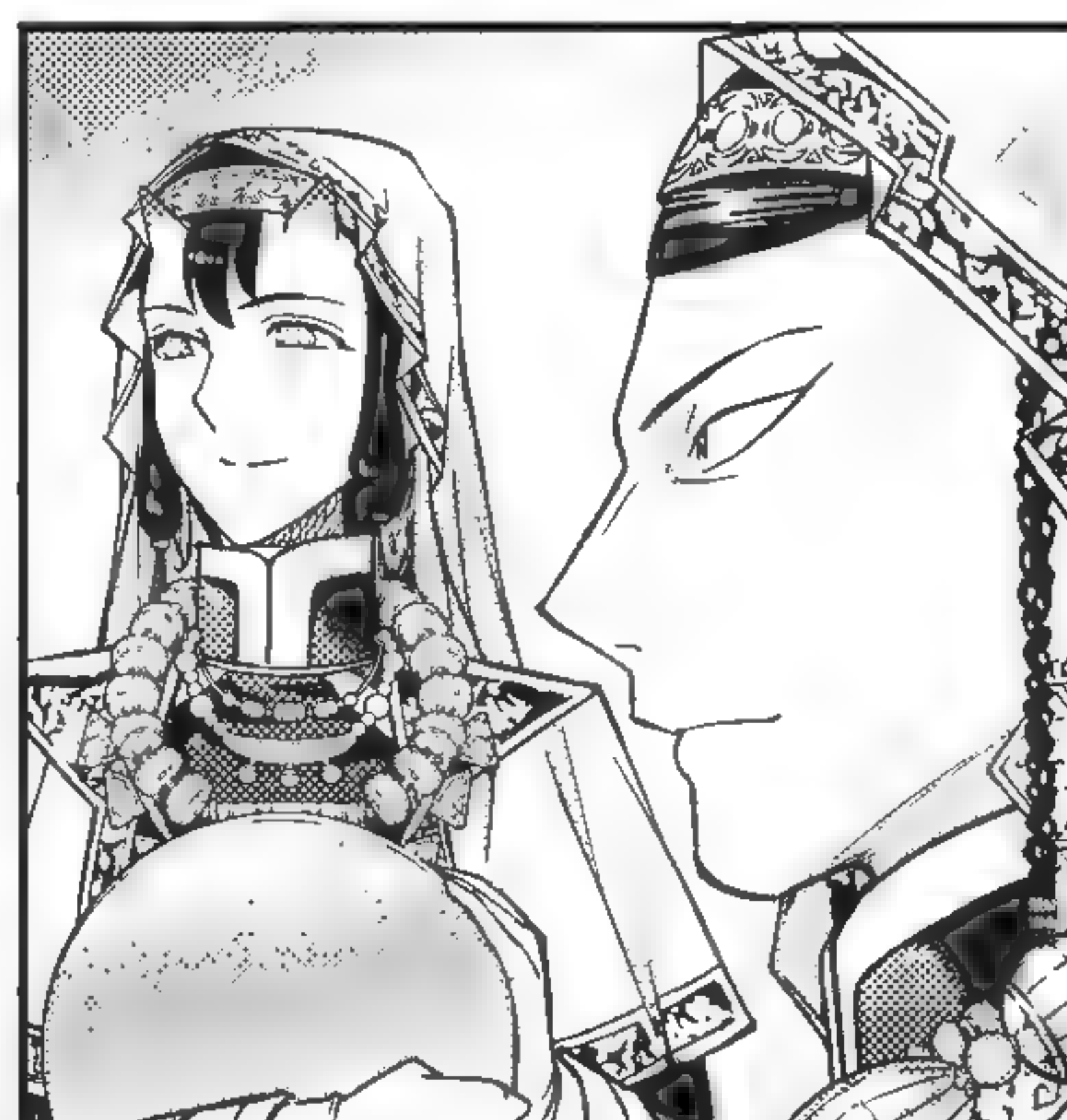
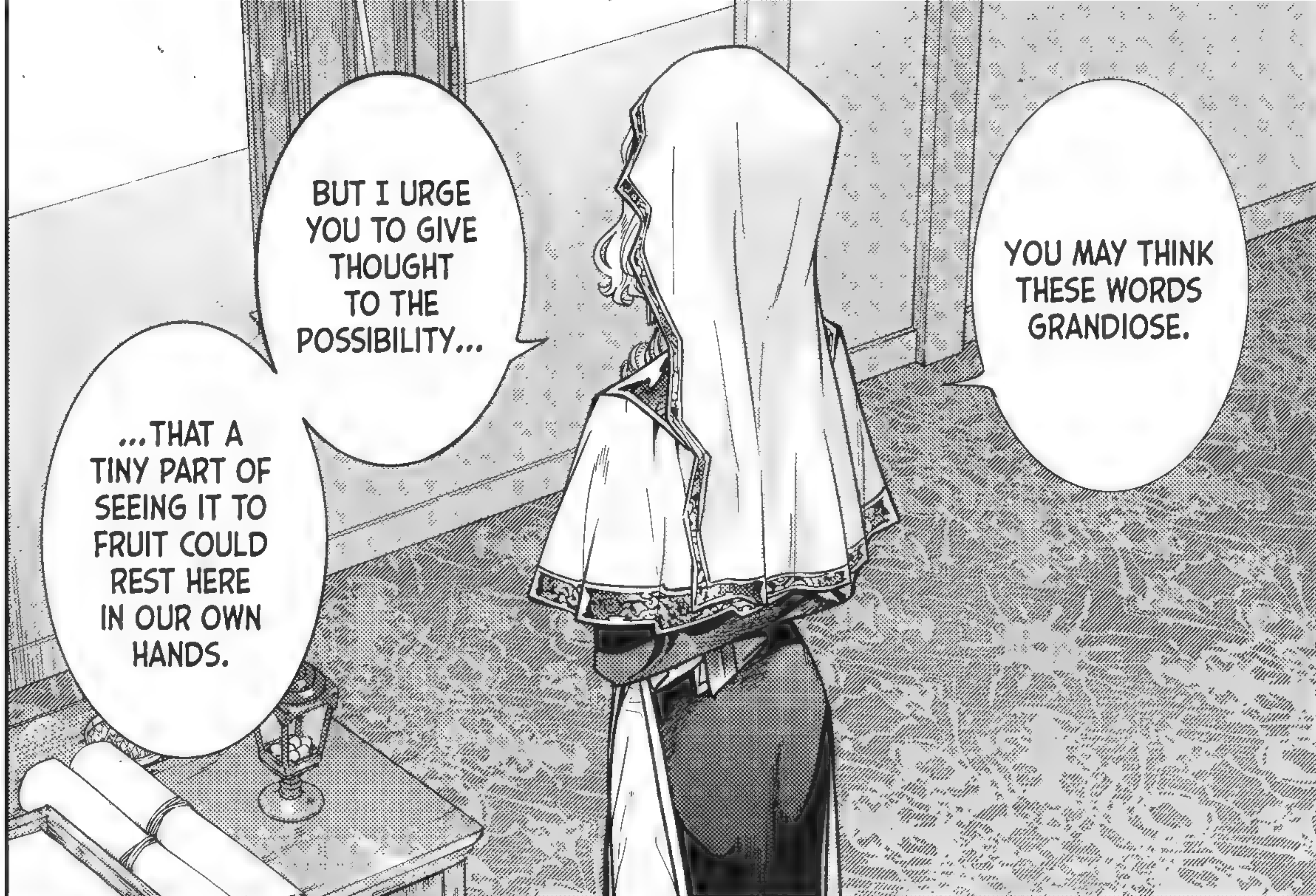
THNK

TH  
THNK

THNK

THNK







**BEFORE  
THIS YEAR IS  
THROUGH...**

**...I'LL  
FIND THE  
OFFICE TO  
WHICH I'M  
MEANT TO  
DEDICATE  
MY LIFE.**

**AND I'LL  
WIN THE  
RIGHT TO  
CHOOSE  
IT WITH MY  
OWN TWO  
HANDS!**

**I'VE  
MADE  
UP MY  
MIND.**

**SHOW  
US WHAT  
YOU CAN  
DO, THEO  
FUMIS!**







**THE WALL BEFORE  
ME IS HIGH.**

**BUT I HAVE  
NO CHOICE  
BUT TO  
SCALE IT!**





**HERE I  
COME!**

**THEO  
FUMIS IS  
PLAYING  
TO WIN!**







NOW I  
REALLY  
AM  
FIRED  
UP!



TELL YA  
WHAT, ONCE  
YOU START  
FINISHING  
TESTS WITHIN  
THE TIME  
LIMIT...

...THEN  
I'LL START  
CALLING  
YOU BY  
YOUR  
ACTUAL  
NAME.

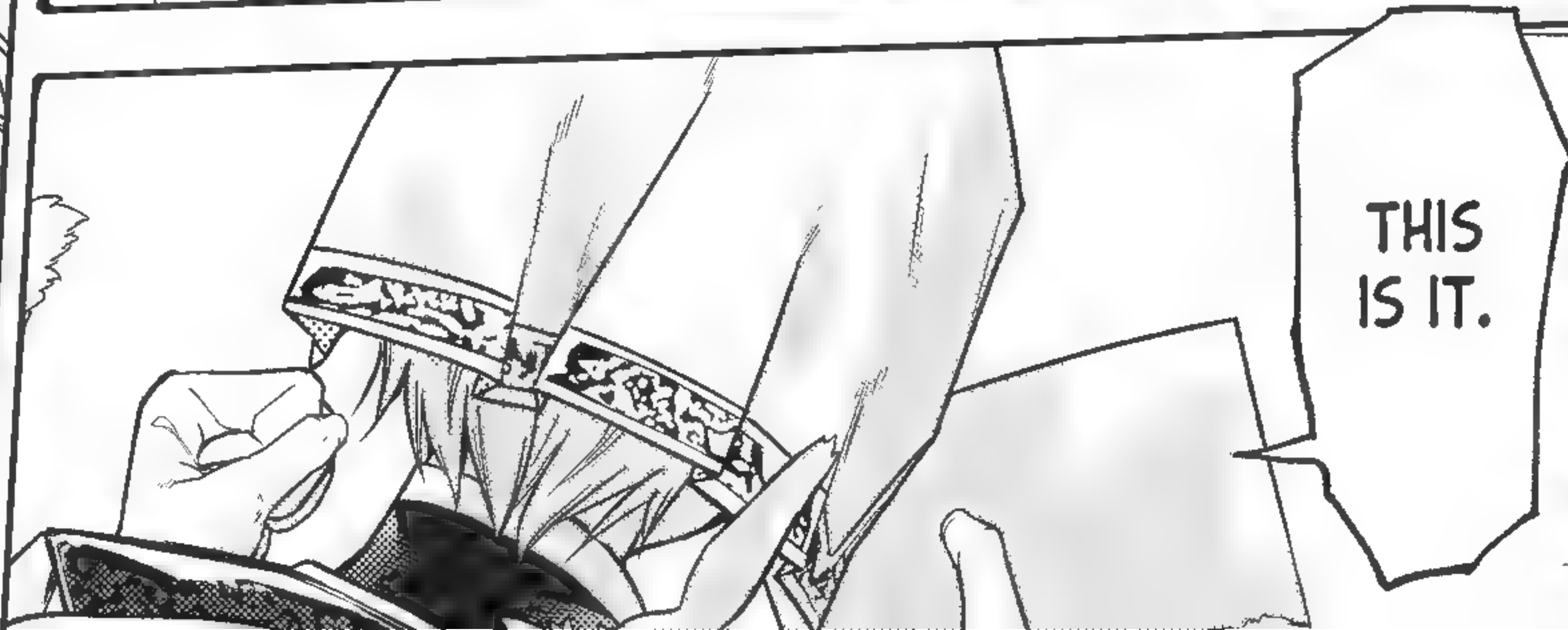


FINE.  
SUMOMO.  
HAPPY?

OH, FOR  
CRYING  
OUT  
LOUD...

REMEMBER  
HOW I  
FINISHED  
MY TEST  
IN TIME?

HEY,  
UM...  
ALV?



THIS  
IS IT.





**Mihona Qoahau**

A girl who just can't seem to nail the critical moments. Easily swayed by whatever novel she's currently reading, and endlessly dreams of playing the suave, sophisticated heroine—a dream that never quite works out. Tends to choke, so her results don't reflect her true talent. Feels more harried than ever looking after herself as a kafna in training.

**Yako Musuf**

A girl who has it all together and is very sensitive to others' feelings. Dislikes any hint of turbulence among the group. At prep school, was the one to mend relations whenever her seatmate Madha—a neverending source of turbulence—stirred up trouble. Feels more harried than ever looking after Madha as a kafna in training.

**Tepel Huracaan**

A girl who has it all together but is quick to chide others for their shortcomings. At school, was the one to drag her longtime friend Sae back to her seat whenever the latter began wandering the room during class. Feels more harried than ever looking after Sae as a kafna in training.





### Mett Nanau

An ambitious young woman whose persistence and enthusiasm carried her through to success despite four failed exam attempts. Nineteen years old and loves to discuss politics.

### Sophie Schwimm

The oldest in this class of trainees, at just 35 years old. Lazy by nature. Puts her perpetually unkempt hair up in braids each morning, but lately, even that seems like far too much trouble. A mother of one, she lives by the motto that everything always works out in the end.

### Tzako Namir

A somewhat pessimistic young woman who has trouble seeing her own strengths. Failed the kafna exam three times yet found herself unable to stop trying, ultimately passing on attempt number four. Twenty years old and very self-conscious of how much younger the other trainees are.

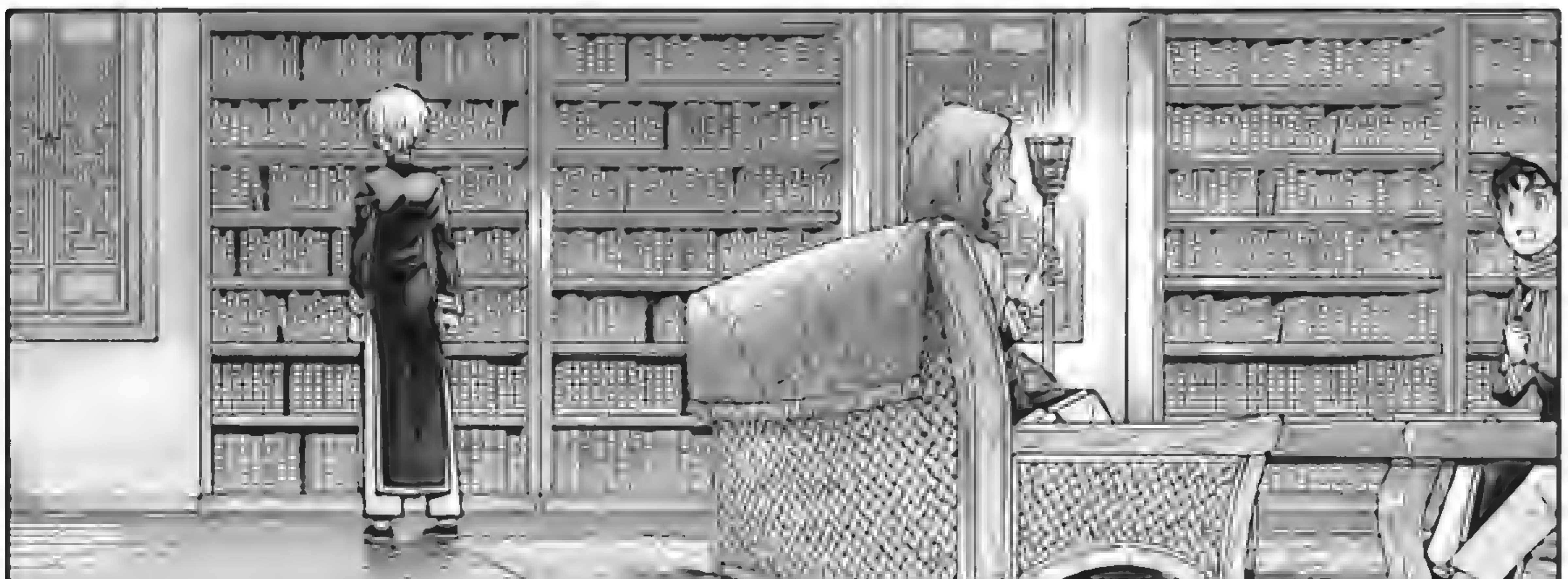
### Tutull Xiu

The youngest in this class of trainees, at just 11 years old. Loves reading—an earnest, simple love that carried this prodigy straight into life as a kafna. Consumes new books at an astounding pace, yet takes time to savor the novels that she loves.

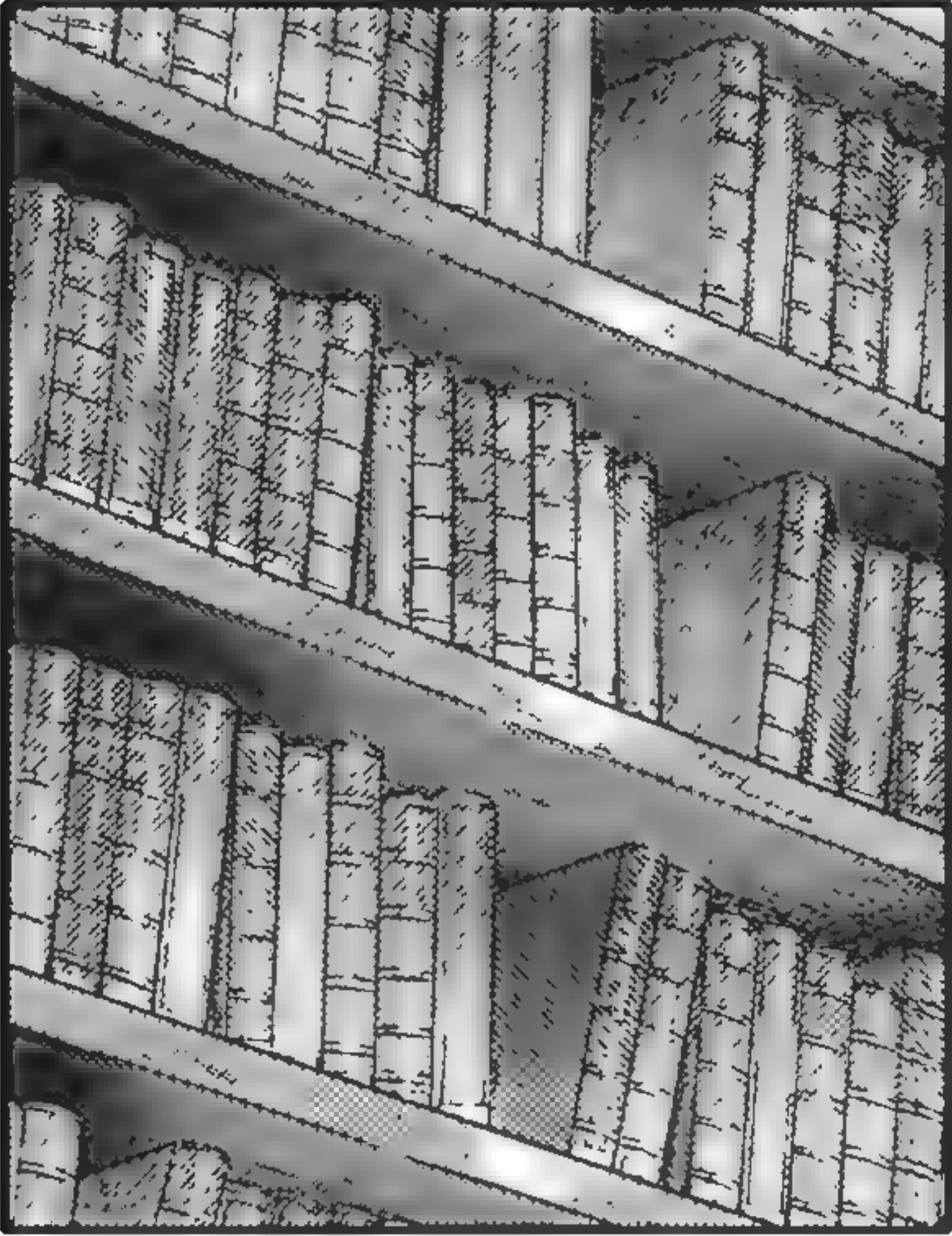


18

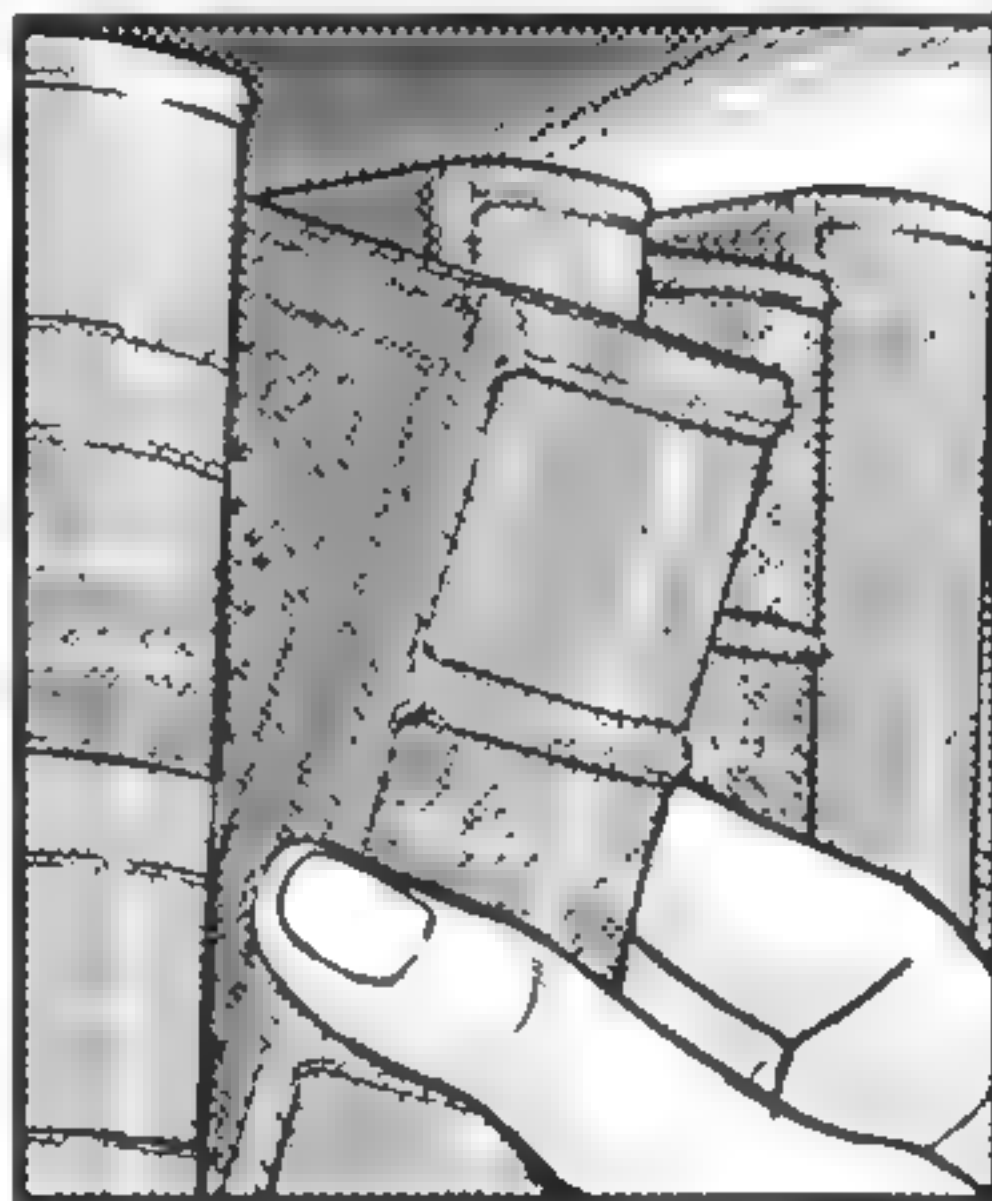
# *Acting the High and Mighty Regal Curatrix*







THIS  
ISN'T IT,  
EITHER...



NO...  
NOT THIS  
ONE...



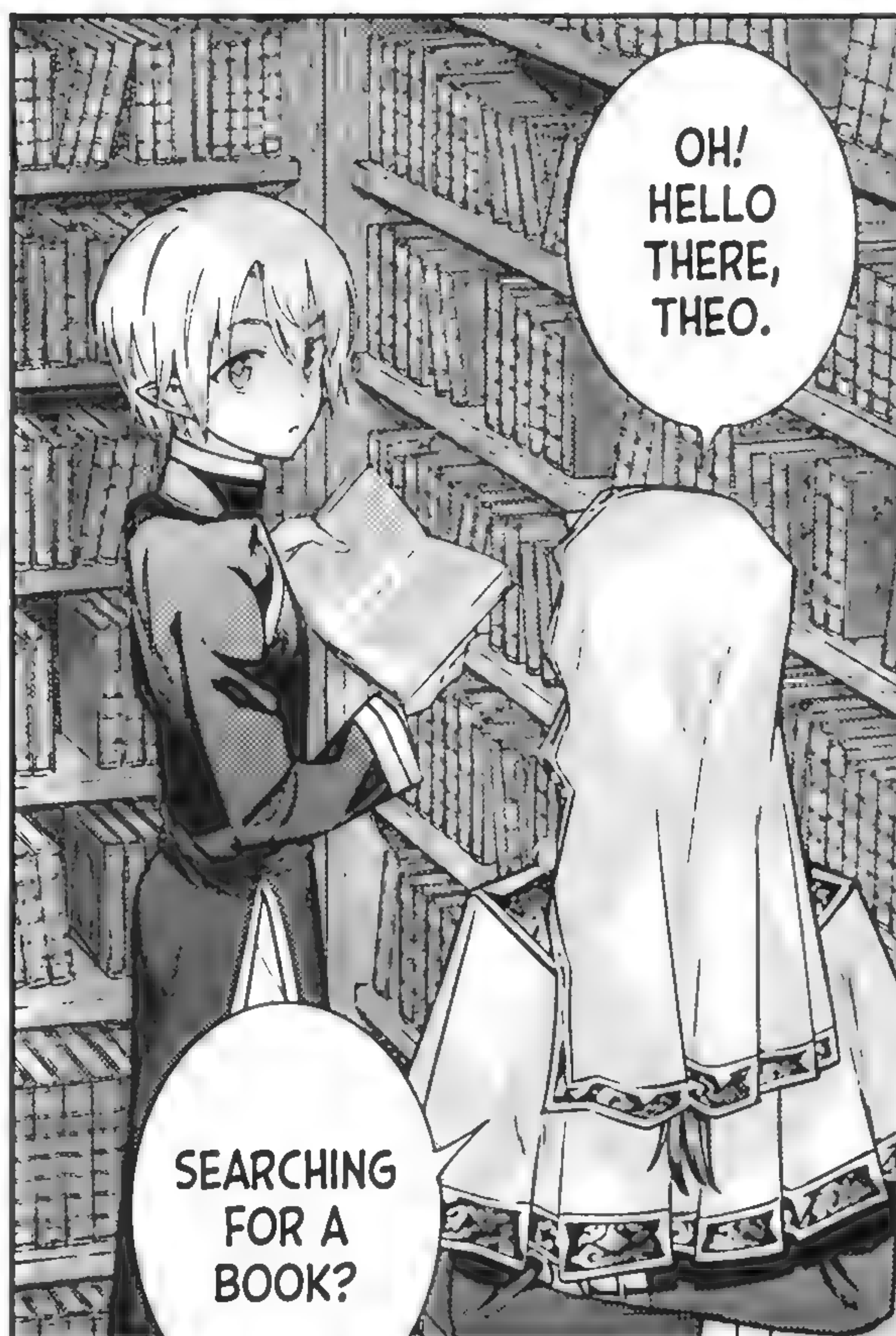
NO...

HOW  
WOULD  
I EVEN  
BEGIN TO  
EXPLAIN...?

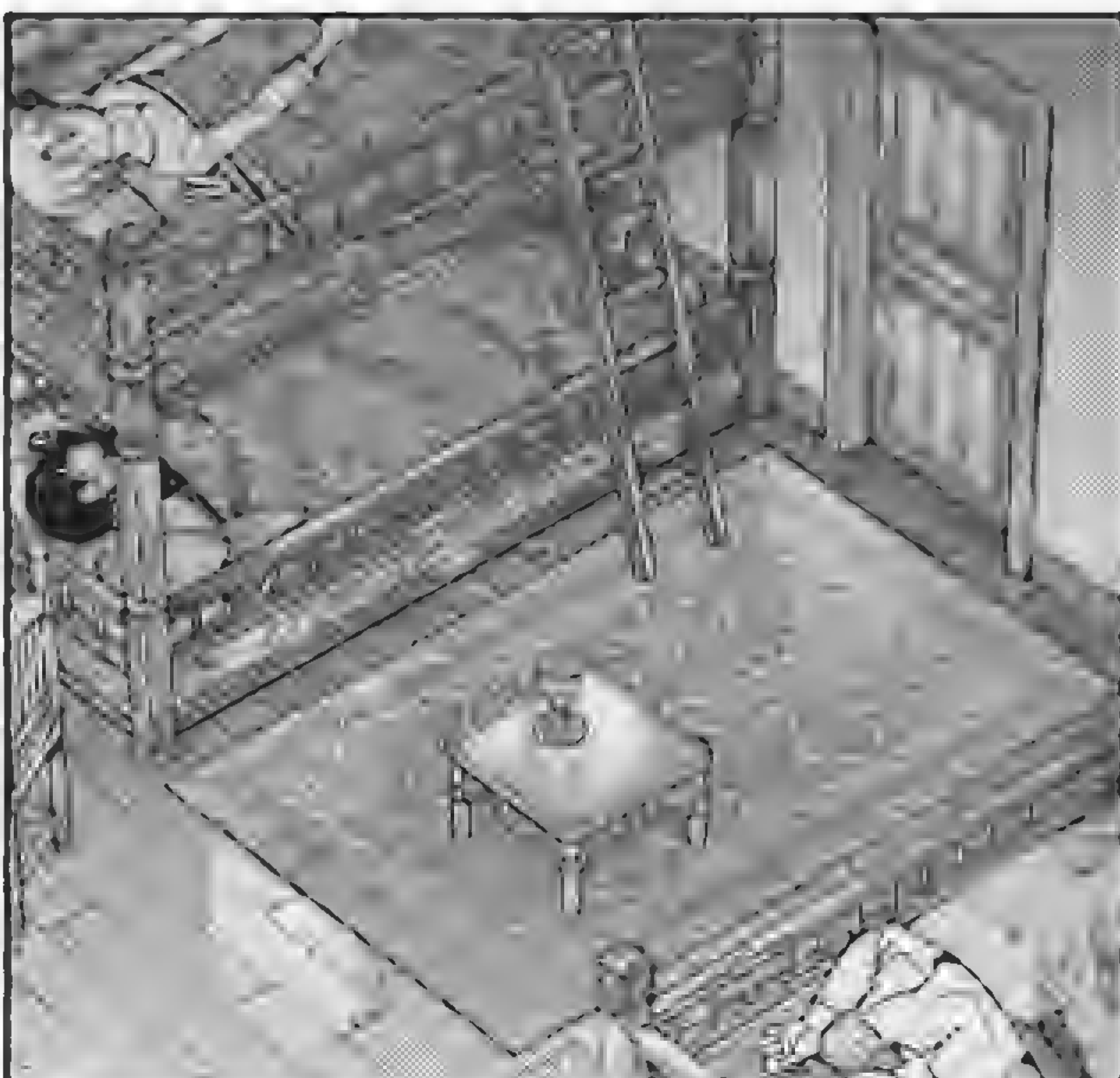
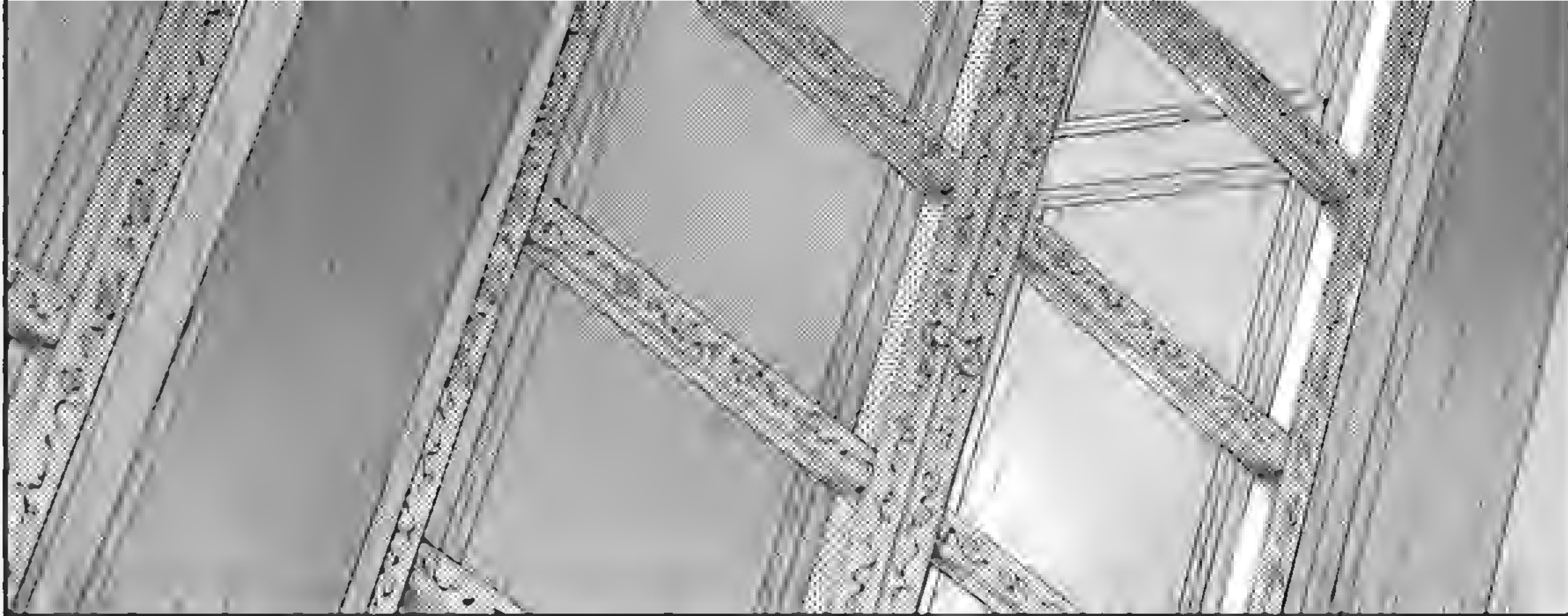
SHOULD  
I TRY  
THE MAIN  
LIBRARY?



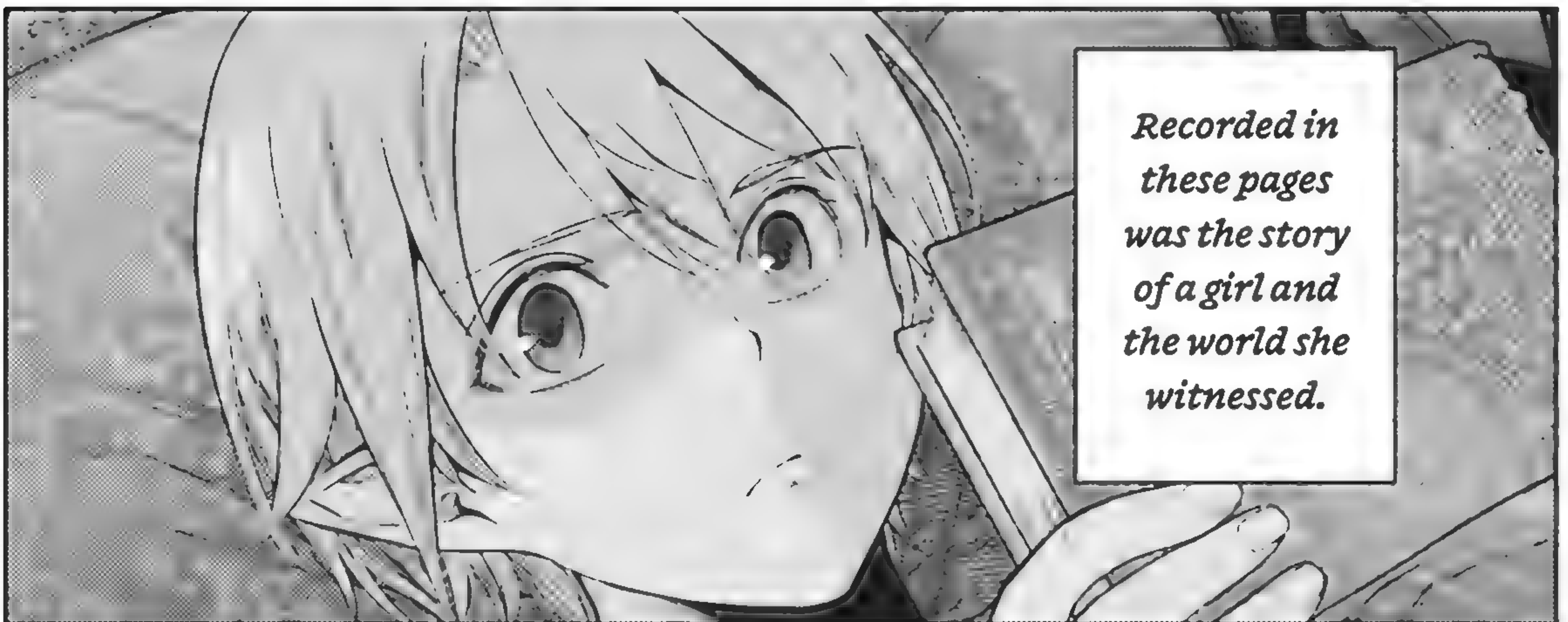
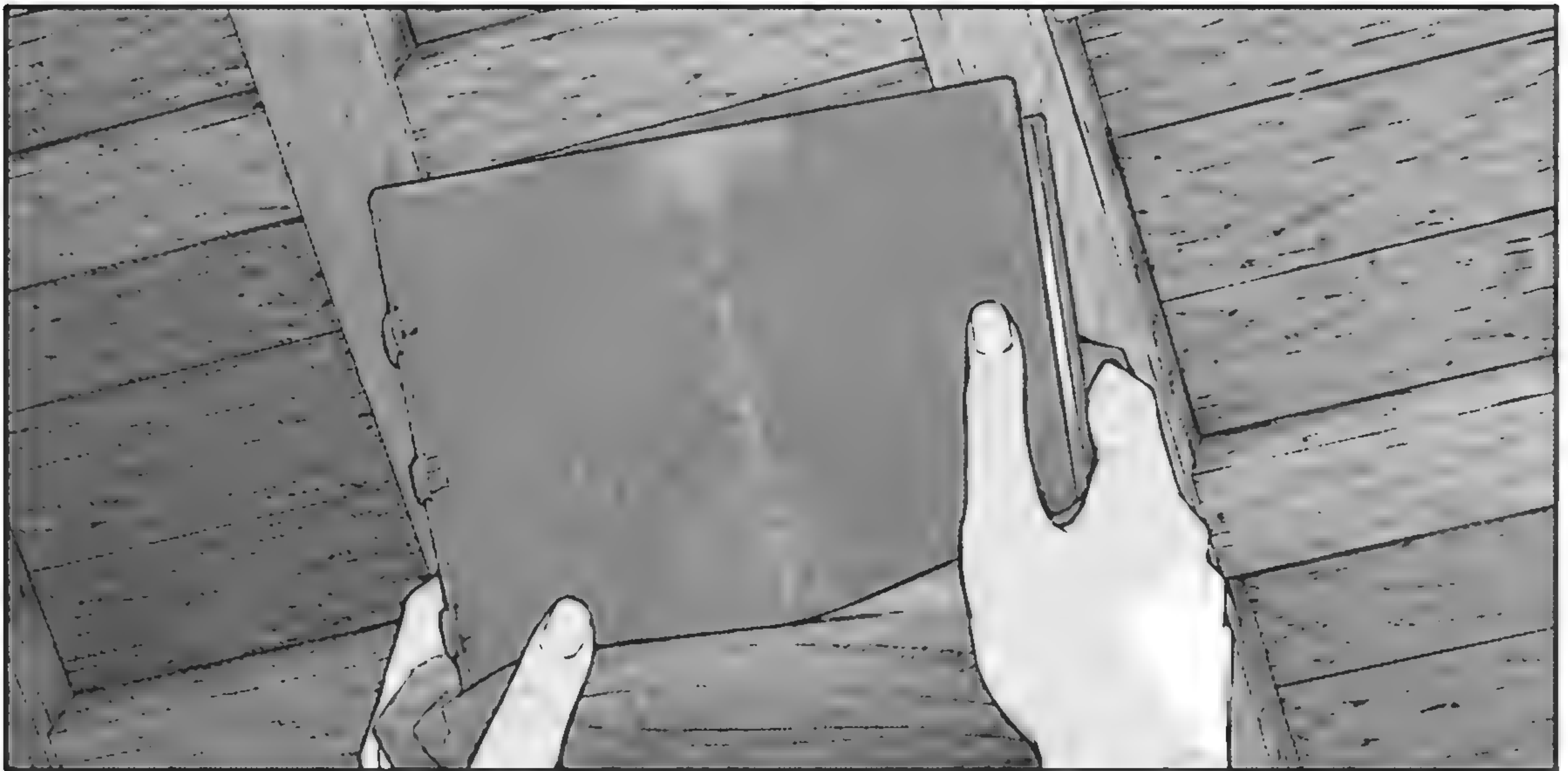




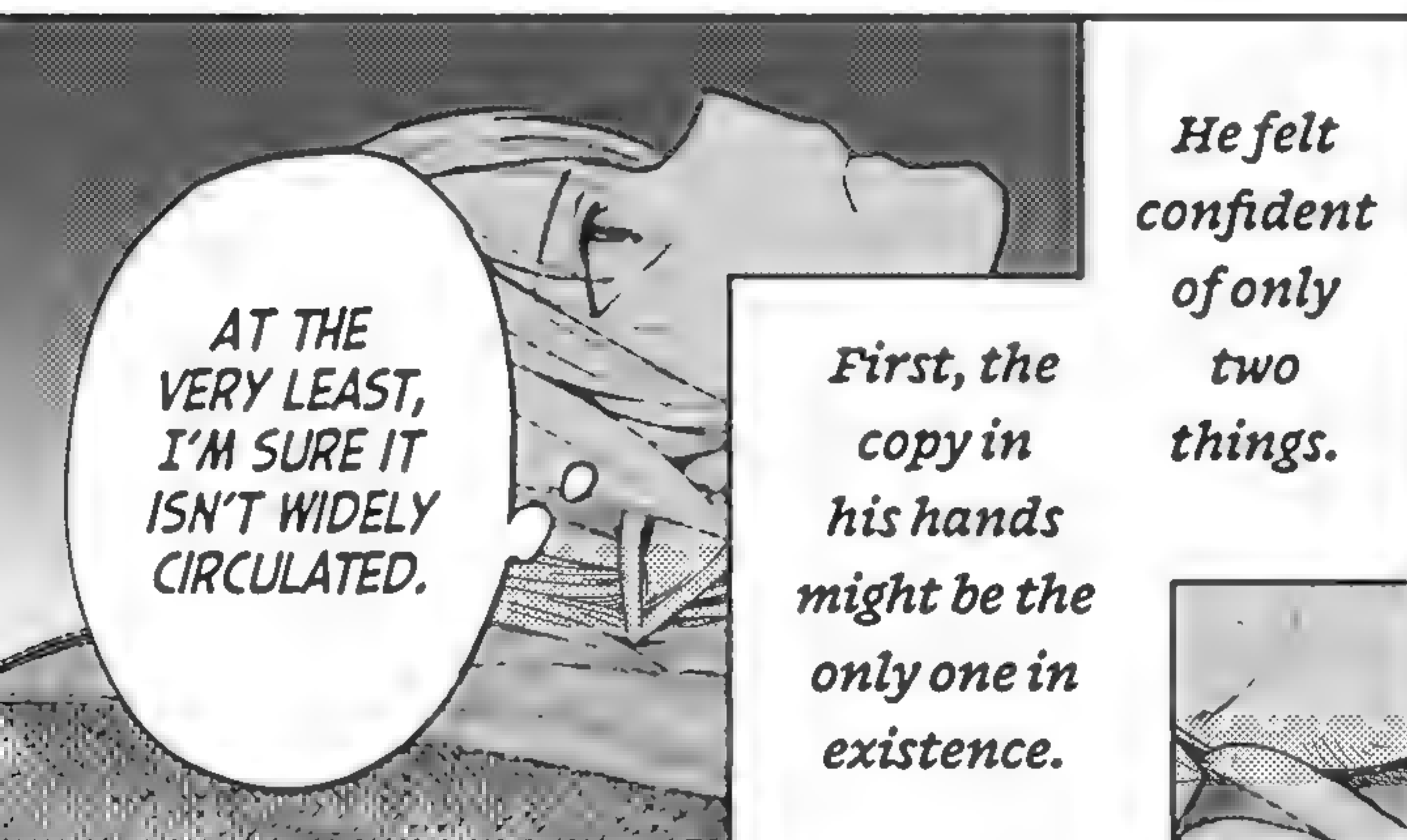








*Recorded in  
these pages  
was the story  
of a girl and  
the world she  
witnessed.*



*AT THE  
VERY LEAST,  
I'M SURE IT  
ISN'T WIDELY  
CIRCULATED.*

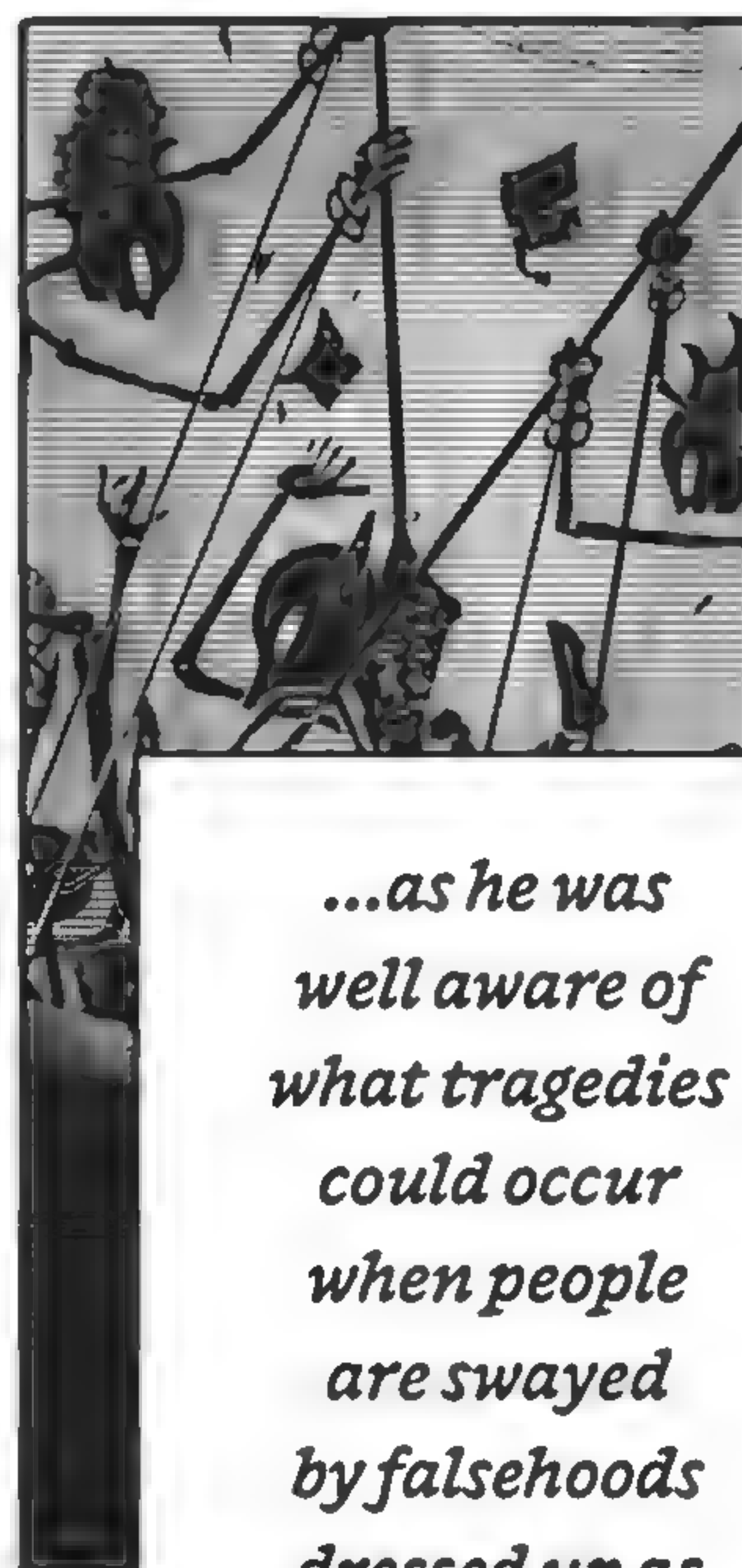
*First, the  
copy in  
his hands  
might be the  
only one in  
existence.*

*He felt  
confident  
of only  
two  
things.*



*AND SOME-  
THING TELLS ME IT  
DOESN'T MATTER  
WHETHER THE  
STORY REALLY  
HAPPENED OR  
NOT...*

*And  
second...*




*...as he was  
well aware of  
what tragedies  
could occur  
when people  
are swayed  
by falsehoods  
dressed up as  
facts.*

*For years  
now, Theo  
had wrestled  
with whether  
to accept  
its words as  
truth...*



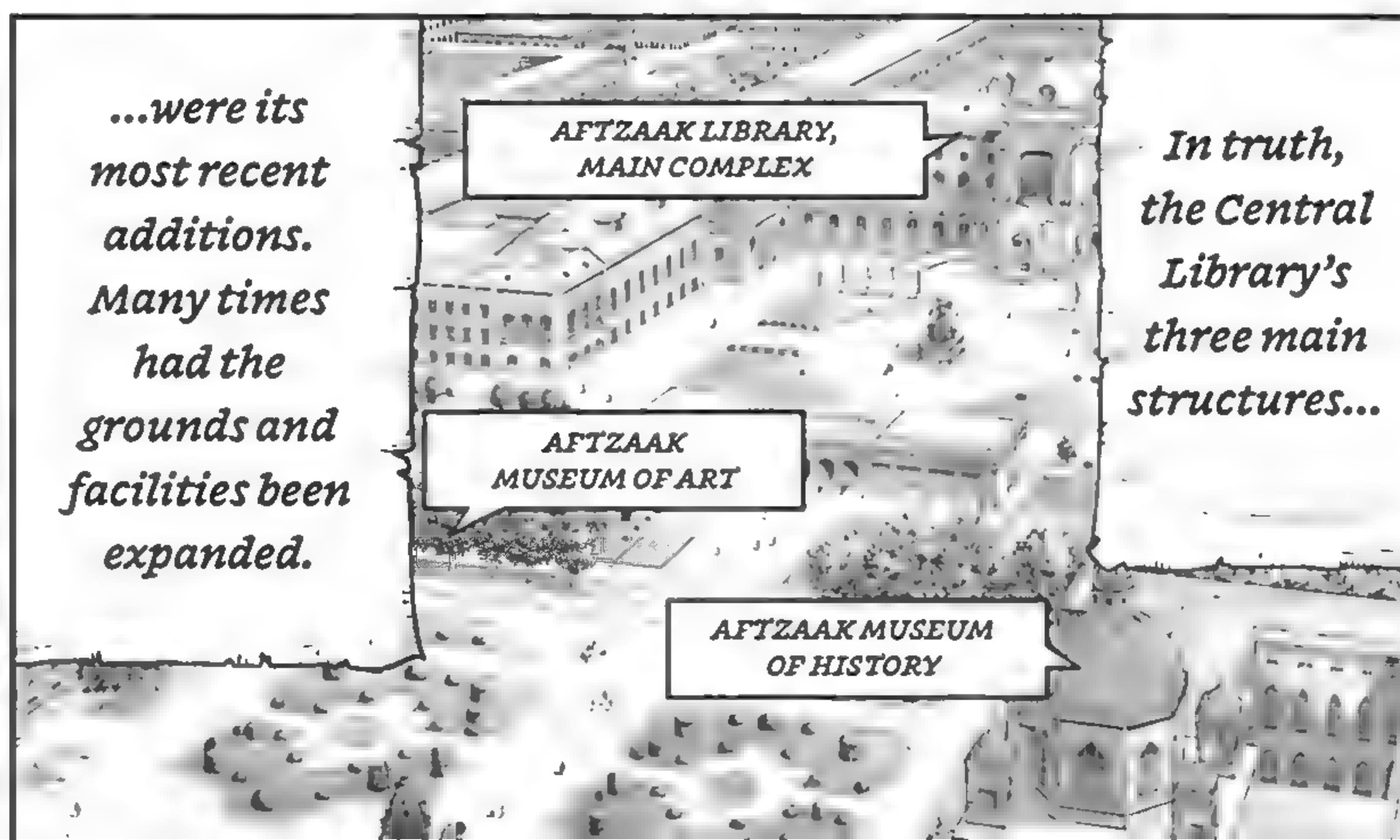
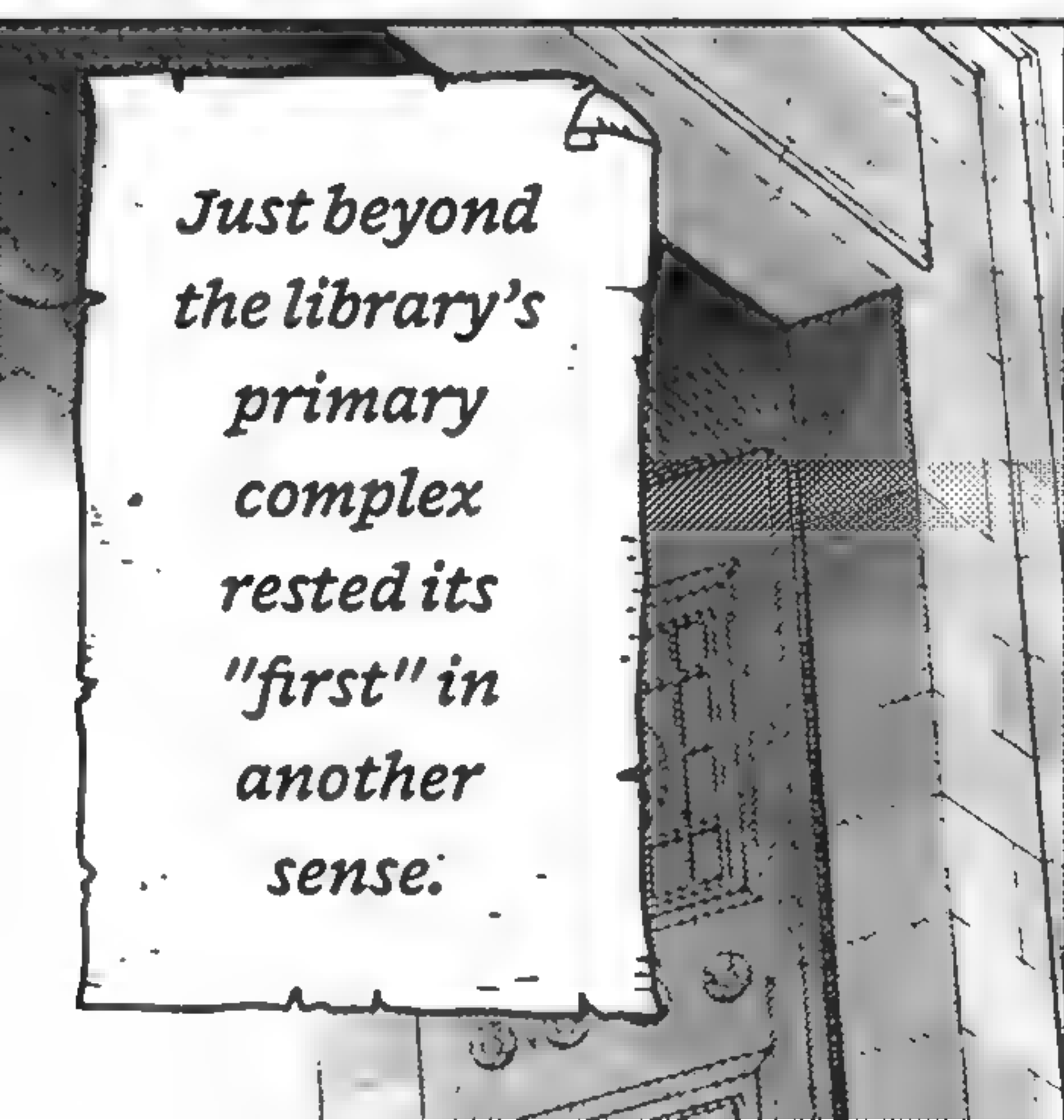
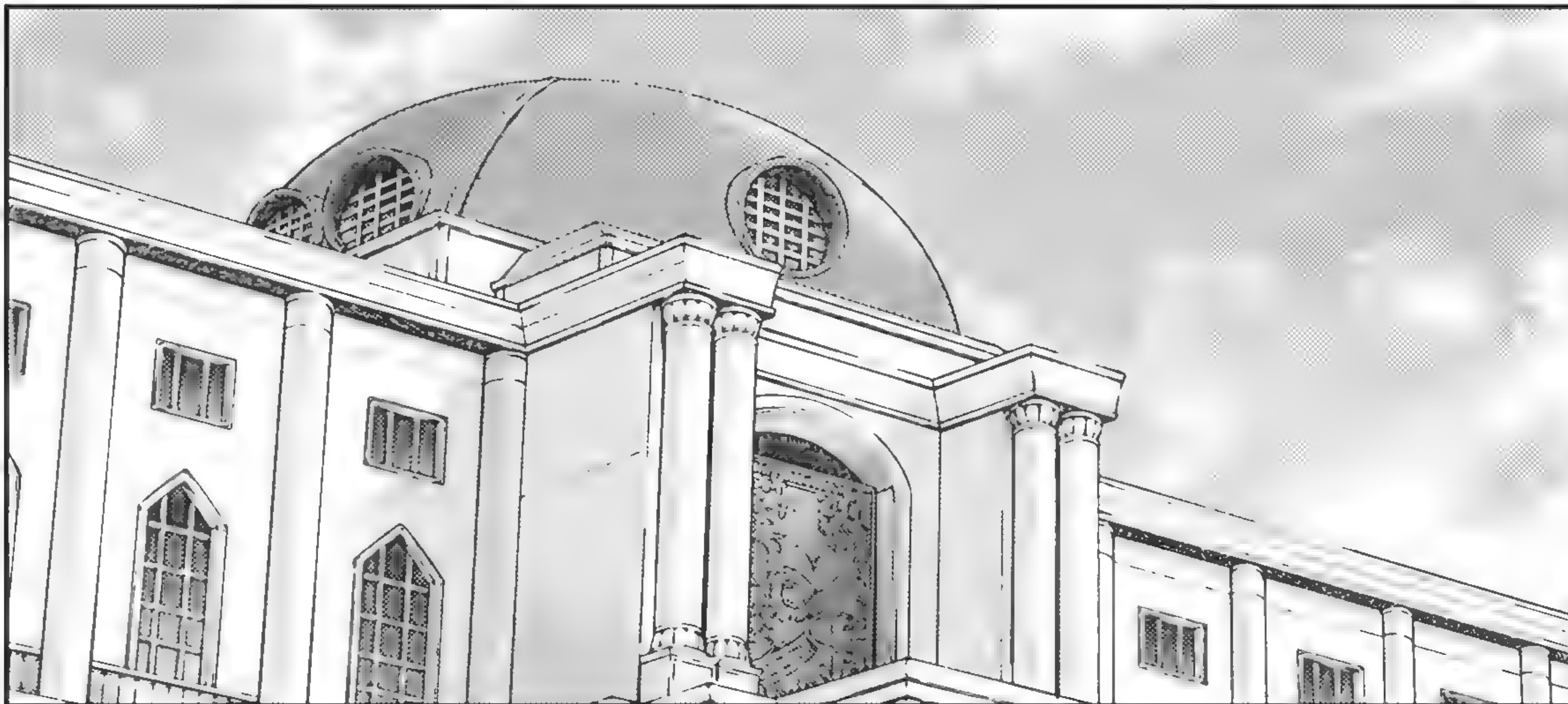




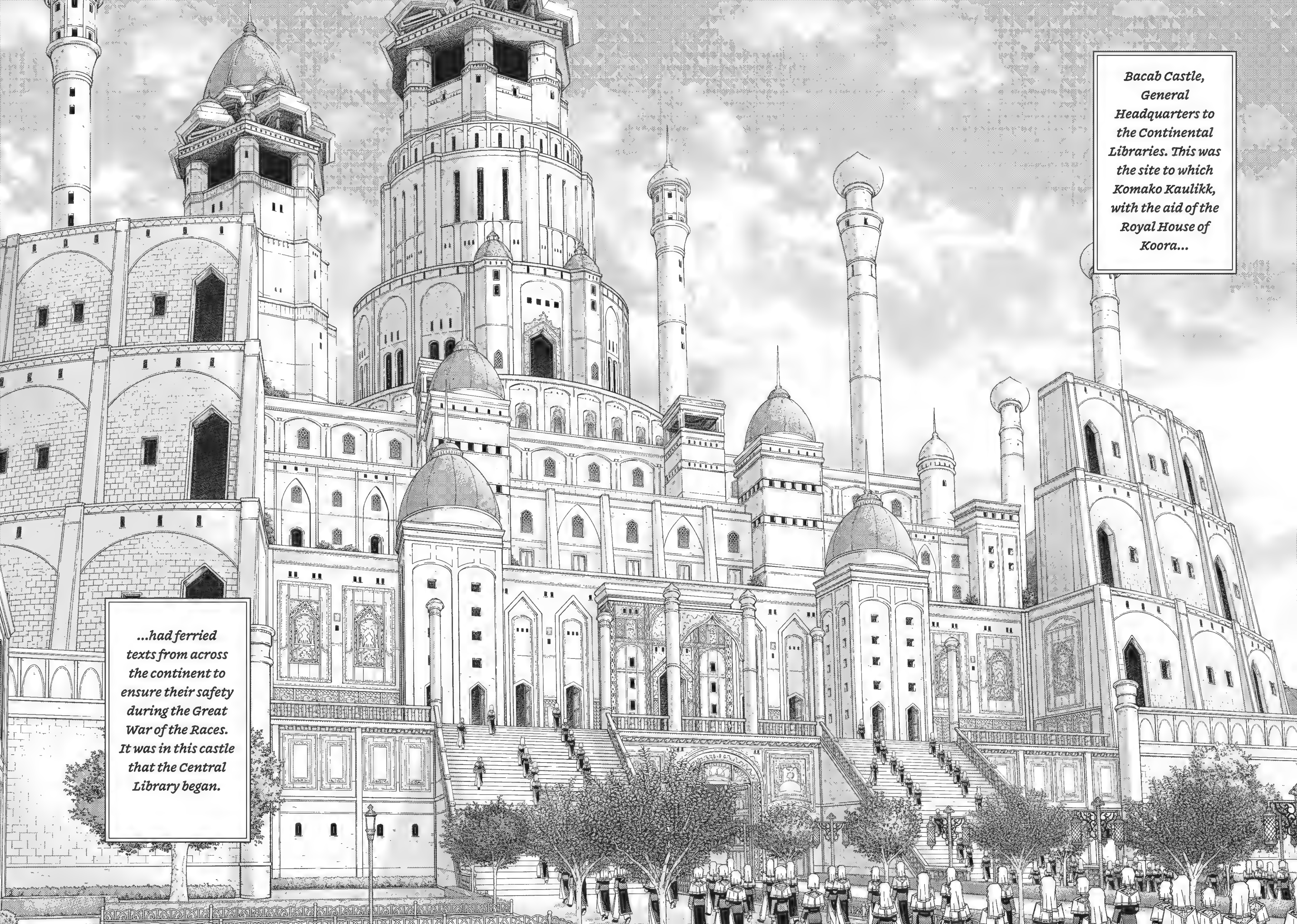
*...that  
what was  
written  
on its  
pages...*

*...had the  
power to  
destroy the  
very world  
in which he  
lived.*





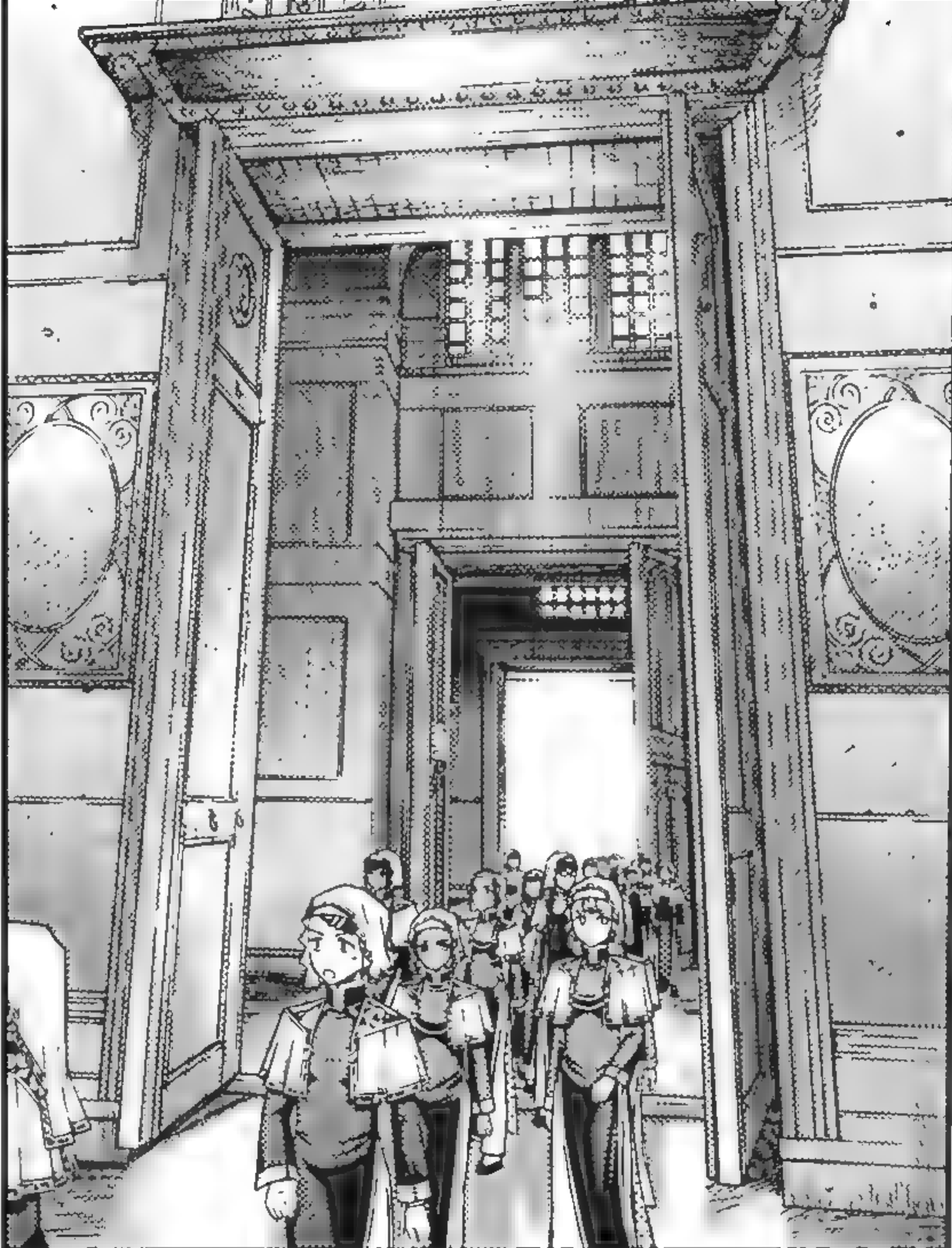




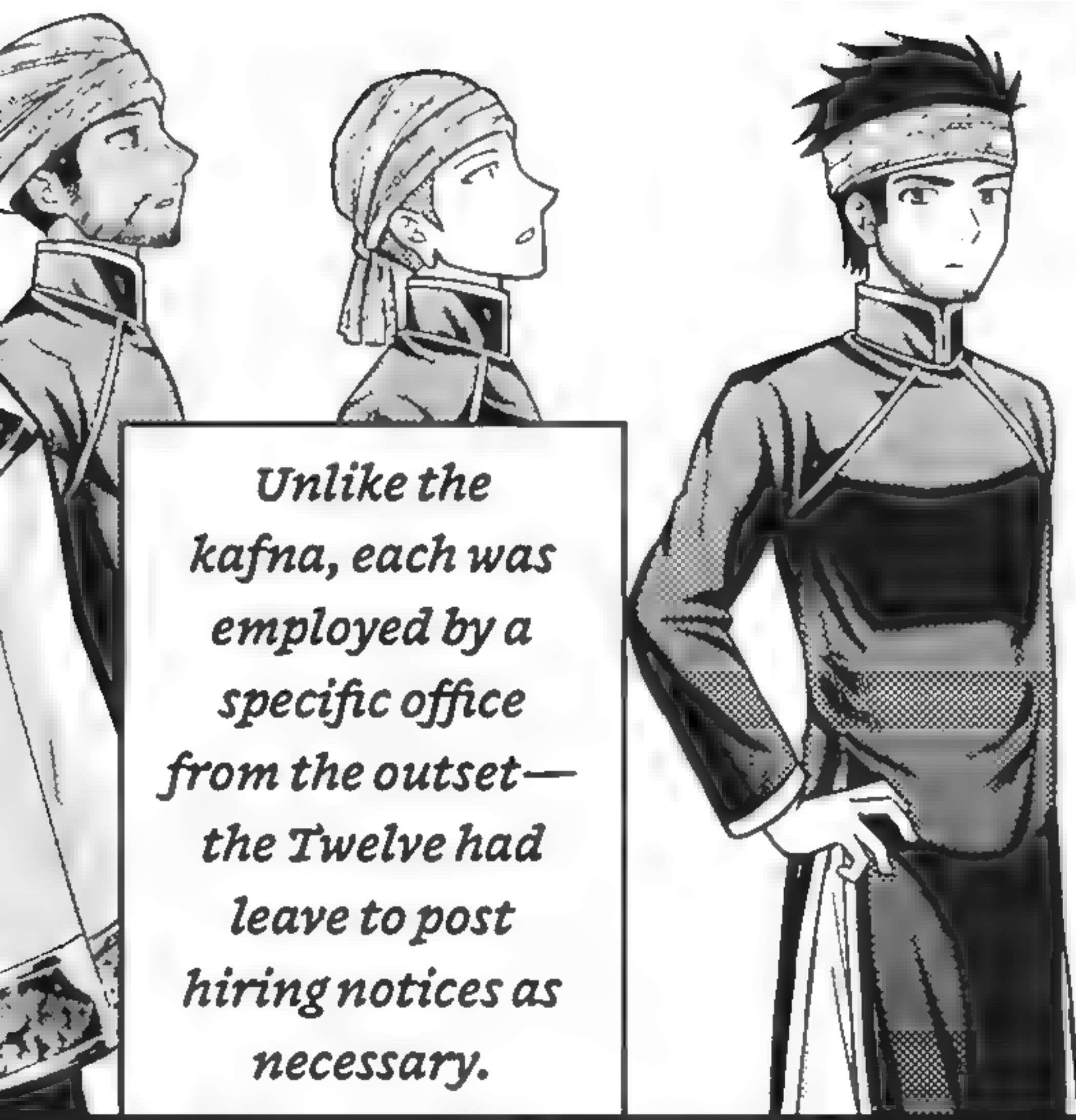
*Bacab Castle,  
General  
Headquarters to  
the Continental  
Libraries. This was  
the site to which  
Komako Kaulikk,  
with the aid of the  
Royal House of  
Koora...*

*...had ferried  
texts from across  
the continent to  
ensure their safety  
during the Great  
War of the Races.  
It was in this castle  
that the Central  
Library began.*

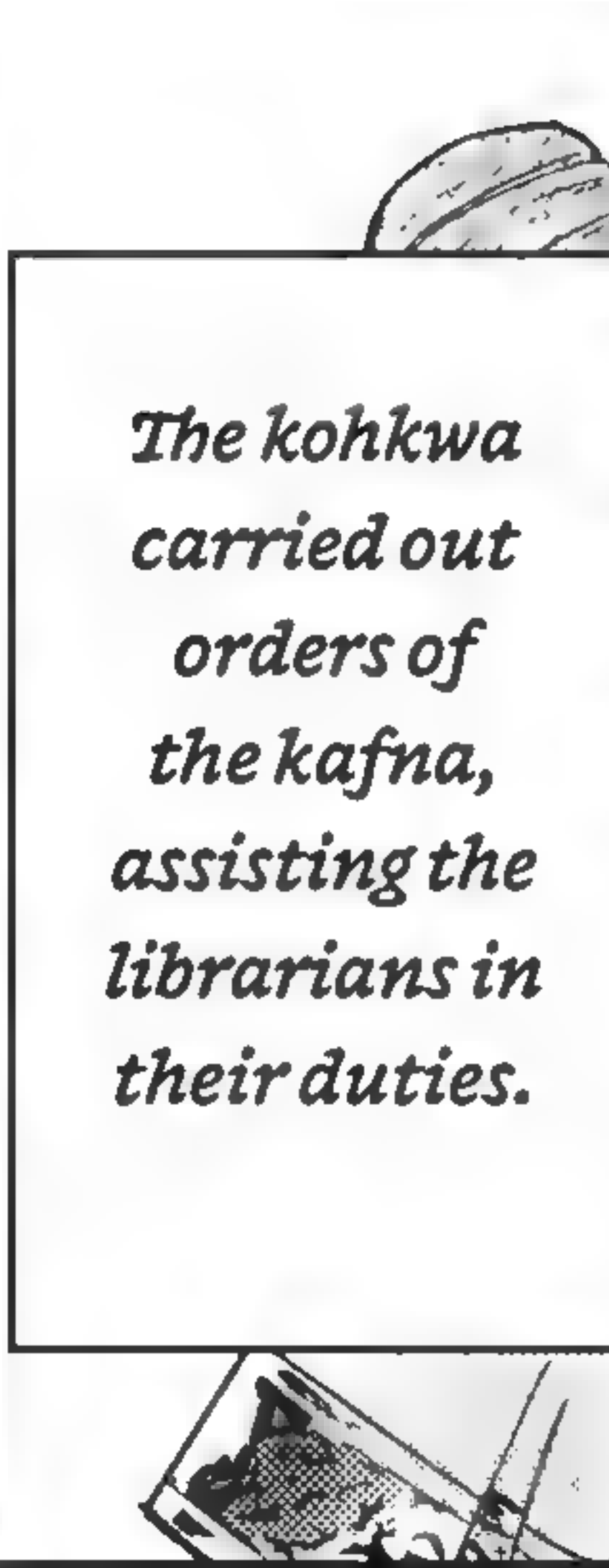








Unlike the kafna, each was employed by a specific office from the outset—the Twelve had leave to post hiring notices as necessary.



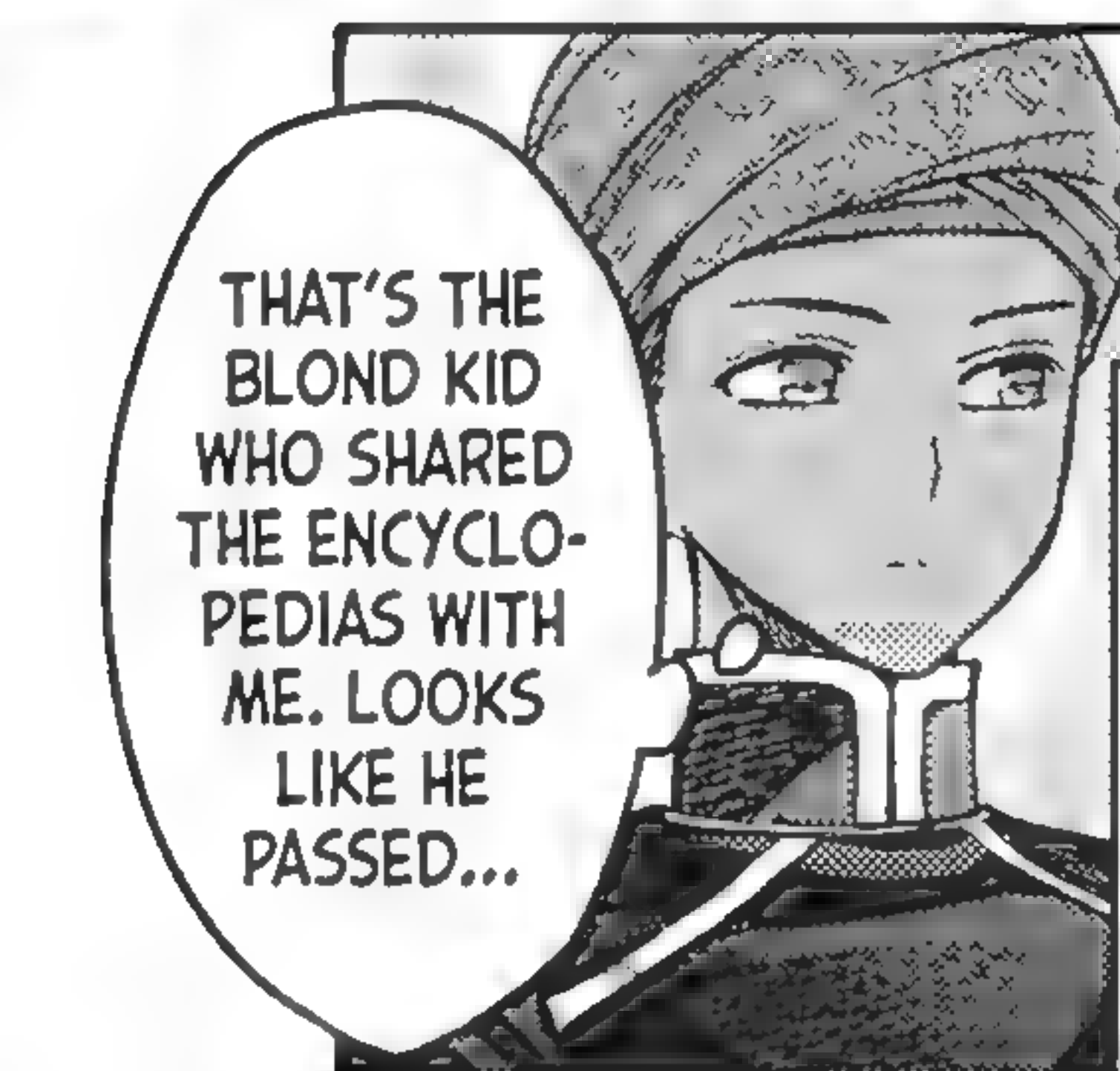
The kohkwa carried out orders of the kafna, assisting the librarians in their duties.



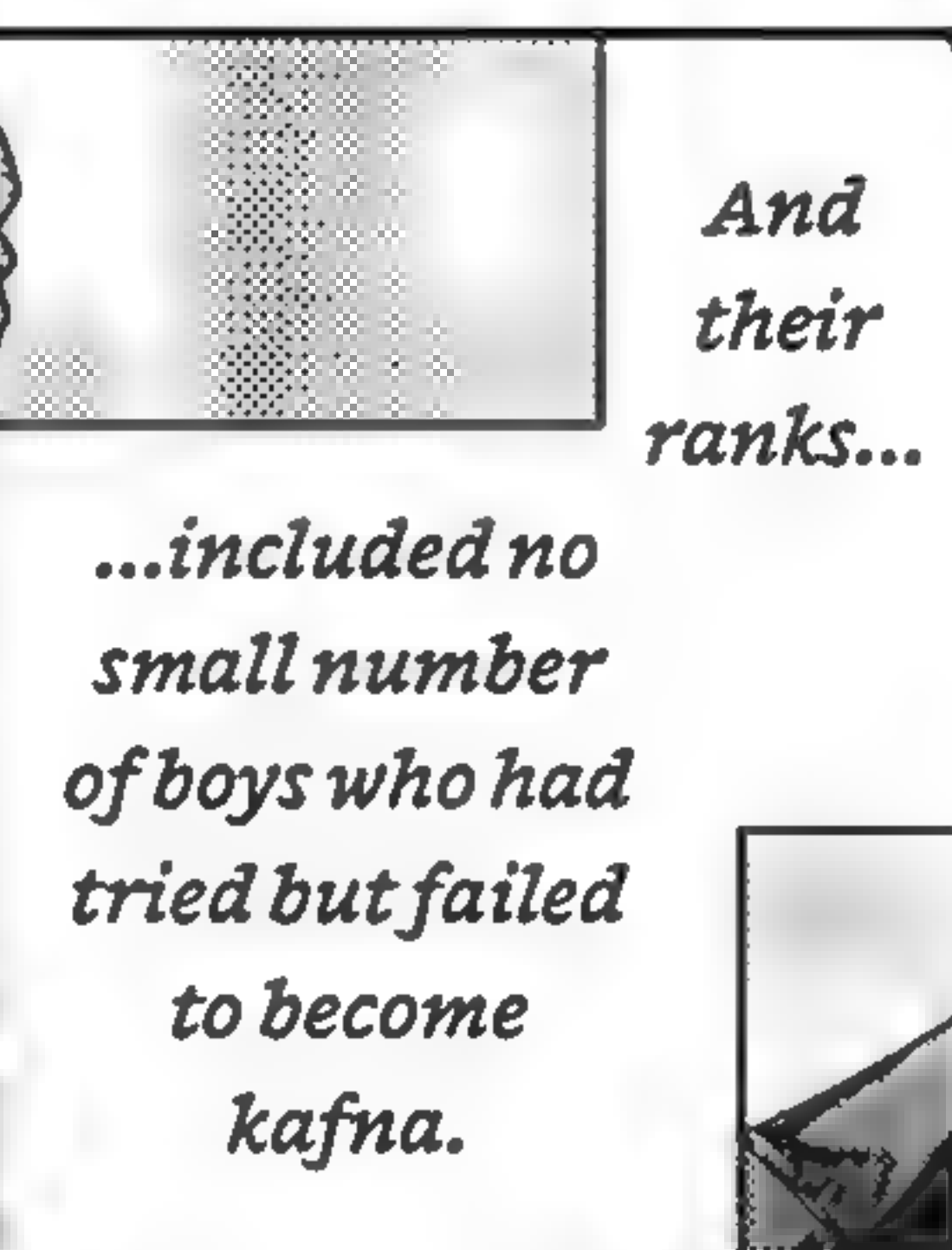
DID YOU FORGET TO PACK YOUR SENSE OF TACT WHEN YOU LEFT HOME?

LUCKY. LOOK AT HOW MANY MORE GUYS THEY HAVE.

I WANNA BE A KOHKWA.



THAT'S THE BLOND KID WHO SHARED THE ENCYCLOPEDIAS WITH ME. LOOKS LIKE HE PASSED...

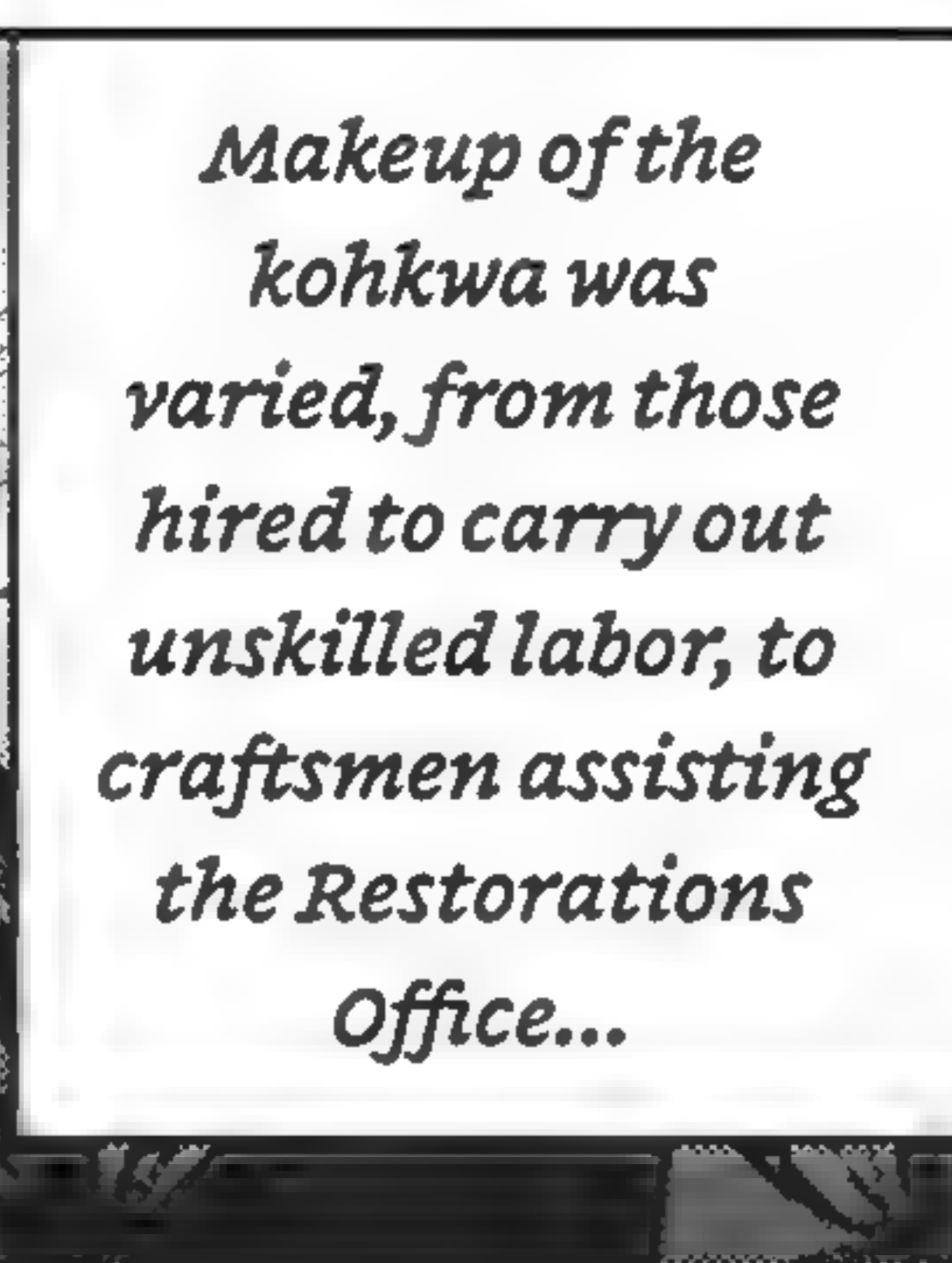


And their ranks...

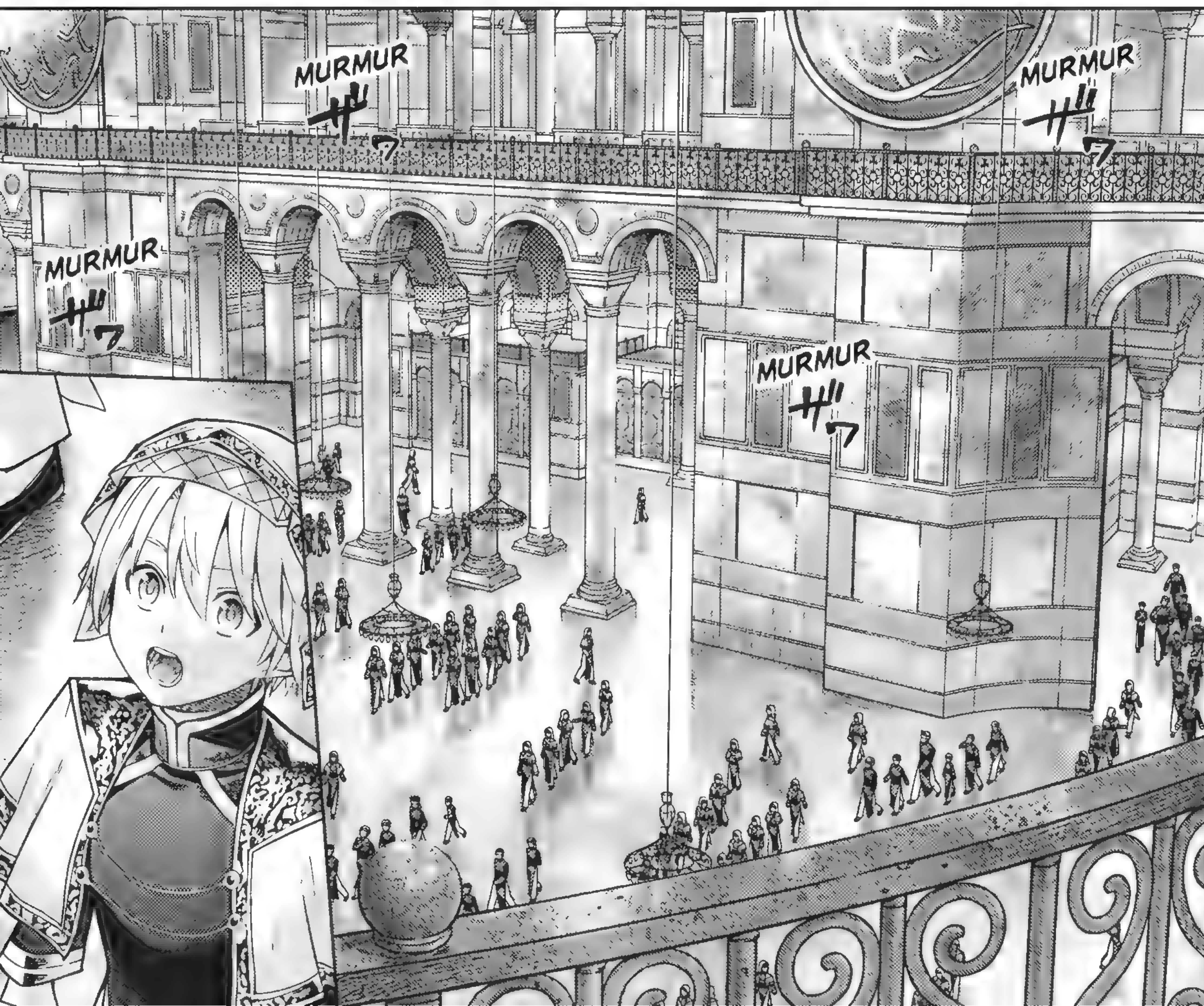
...included no small number of boys who had tried but failed to become kafna.



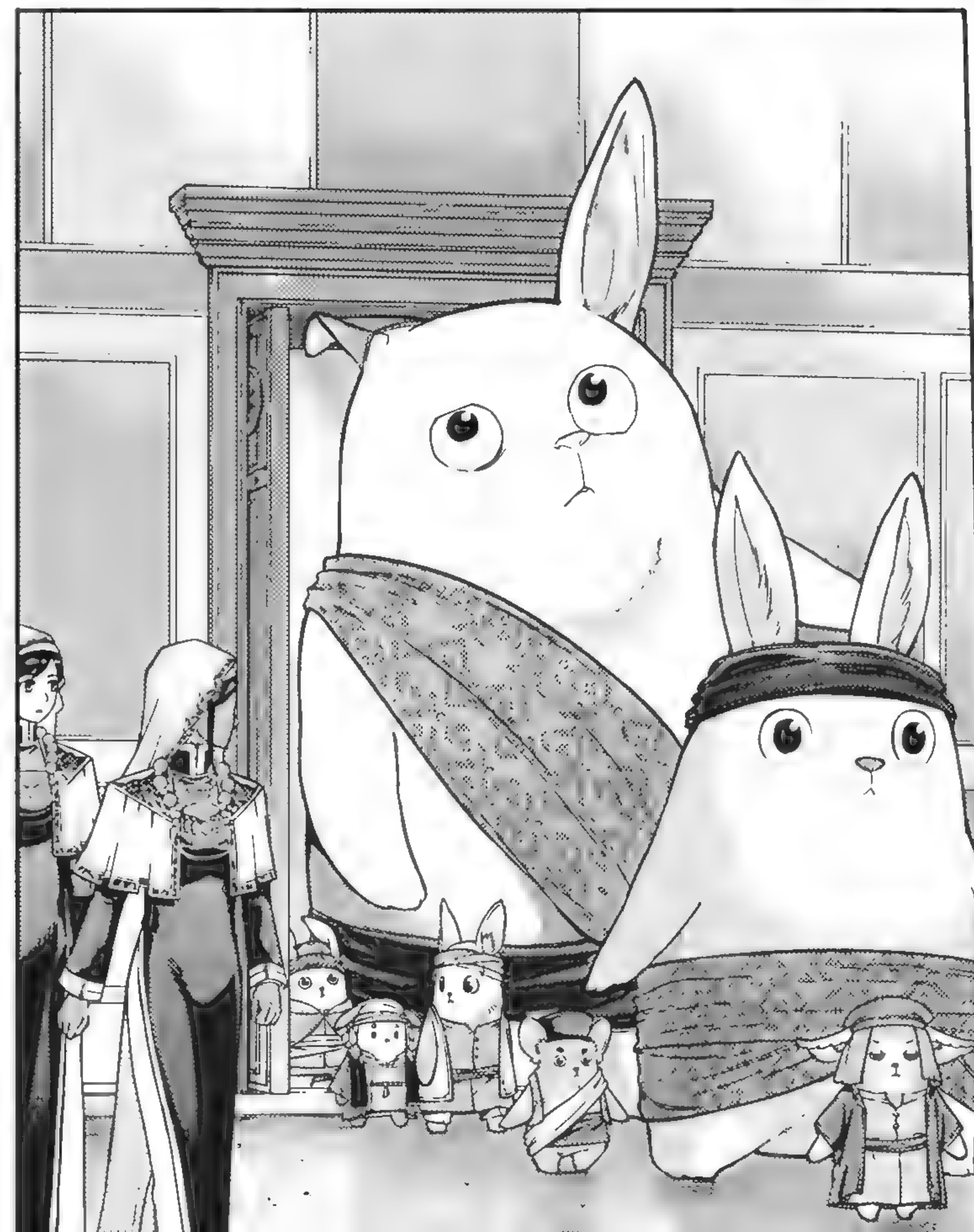
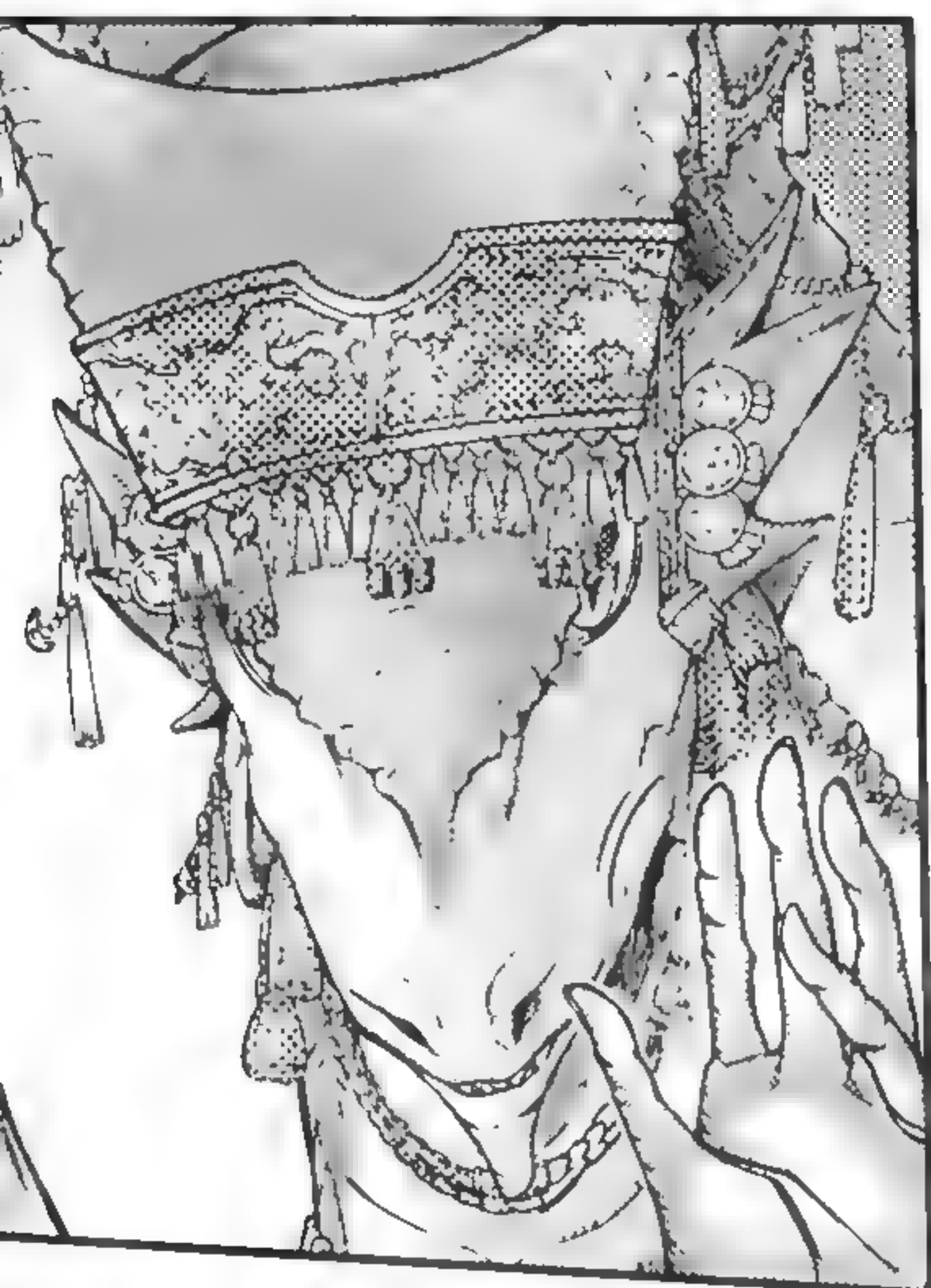
...and mercenaries helping to fulfill the duties of the Protections Office.



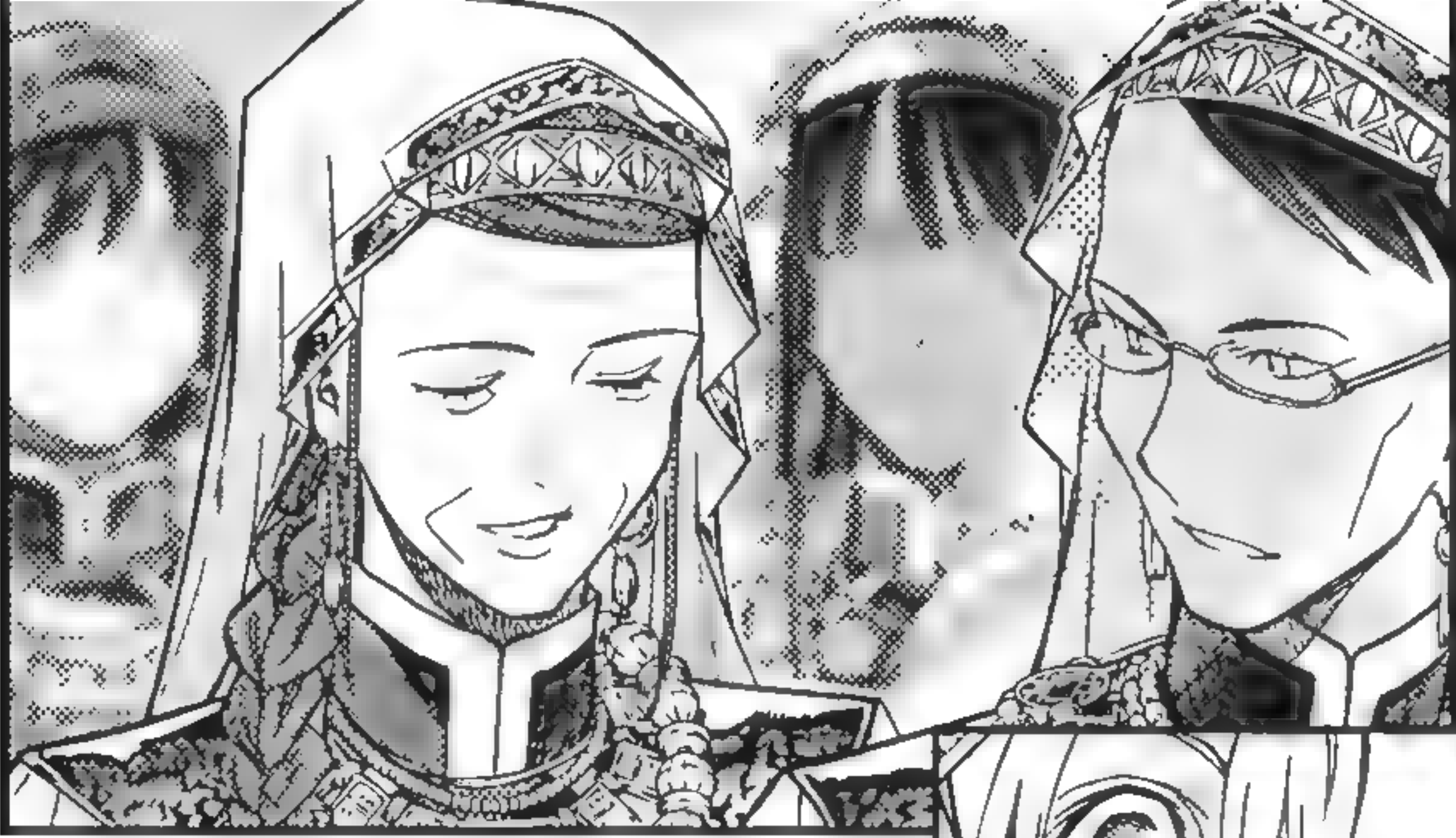
Makeup of the kohkwa was varied, from those hired to carry out unskilled labor, to craftsmen assisting the Restorations Office...











THAT'S  
RIGHT.



WOW.  
JUST  
LOOK AT  
'EM ALL.

EVERYONE'S  
IN ATTENDANCE,  
FROM US NOBODY  
TRAINEES ALL  
THE WAY UP TO  
THE BIG KAFNA  
WHO CALL  
THE SHOTS!

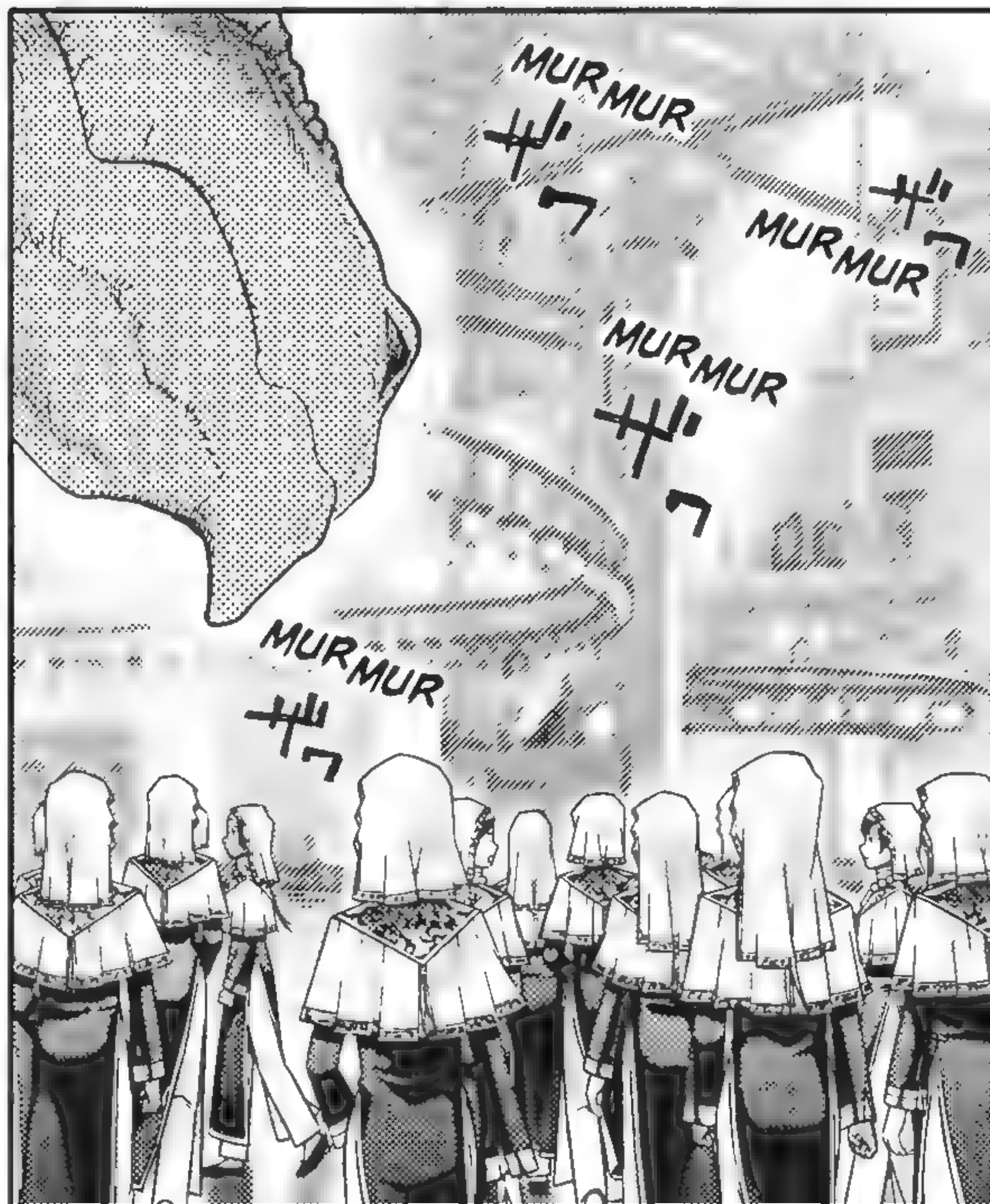


...BUT I'M  
PART OF THIS  
NOW! I'M  
ONE OF THE  
PROTECTORS  
OF BOOKS!

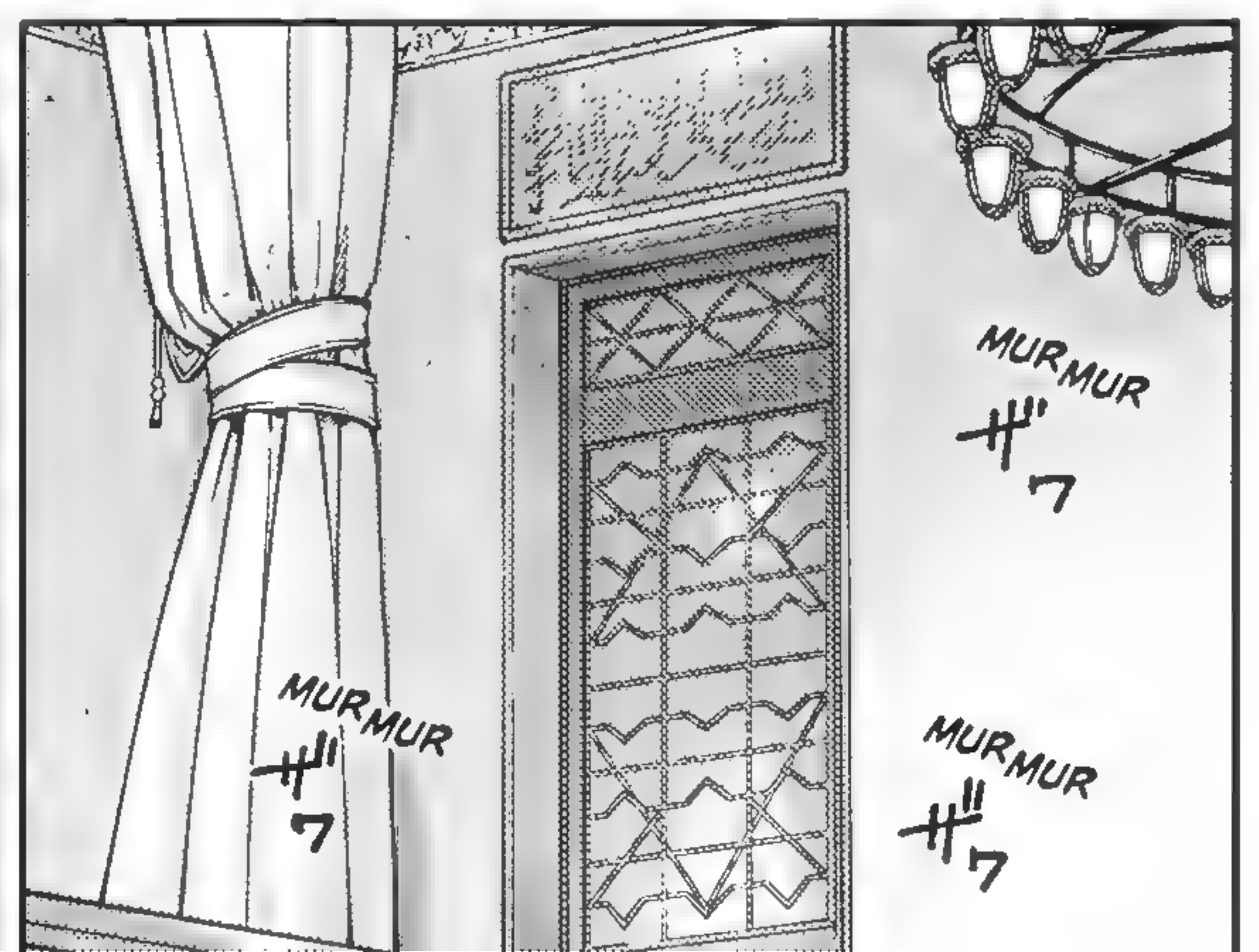
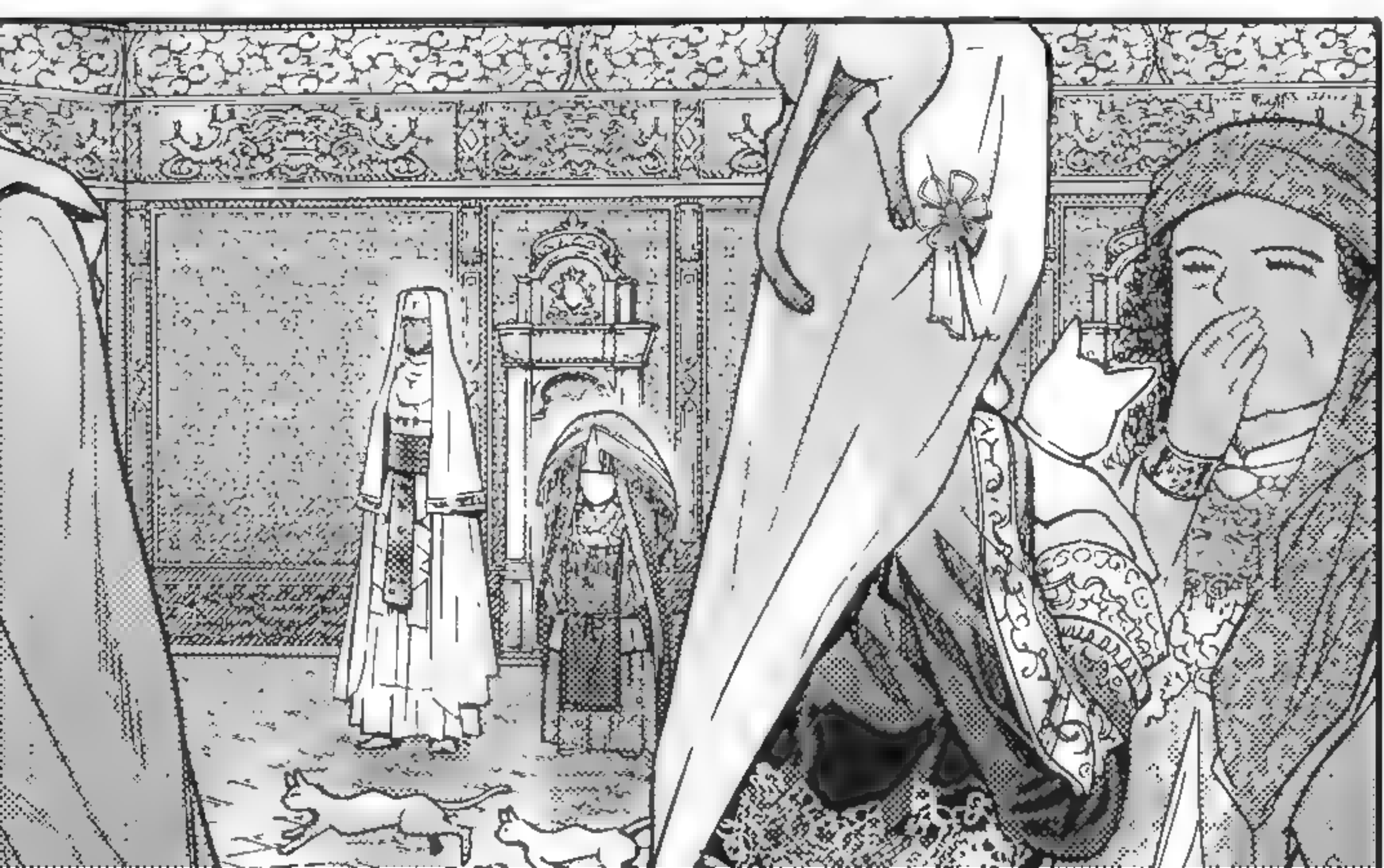
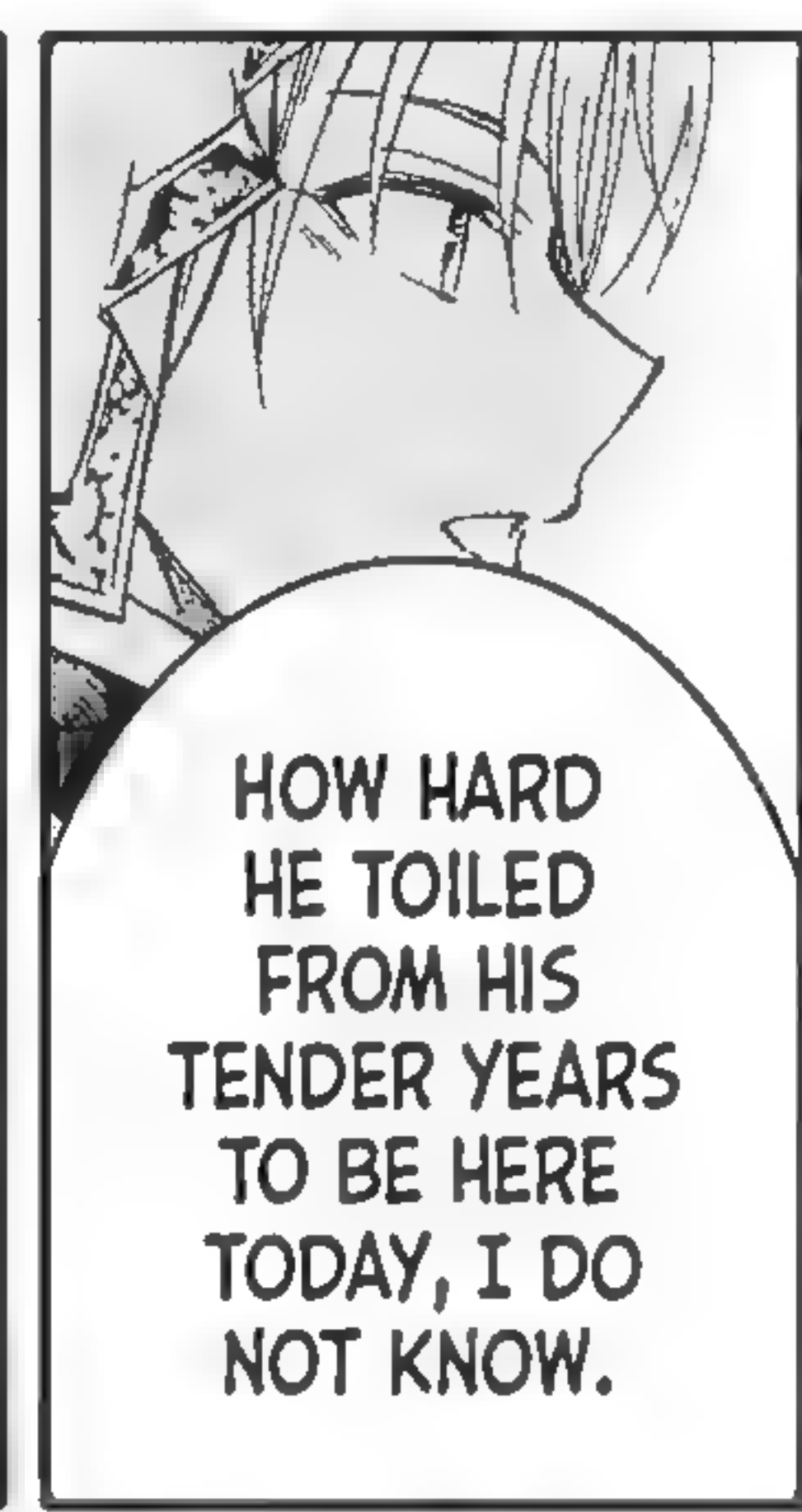
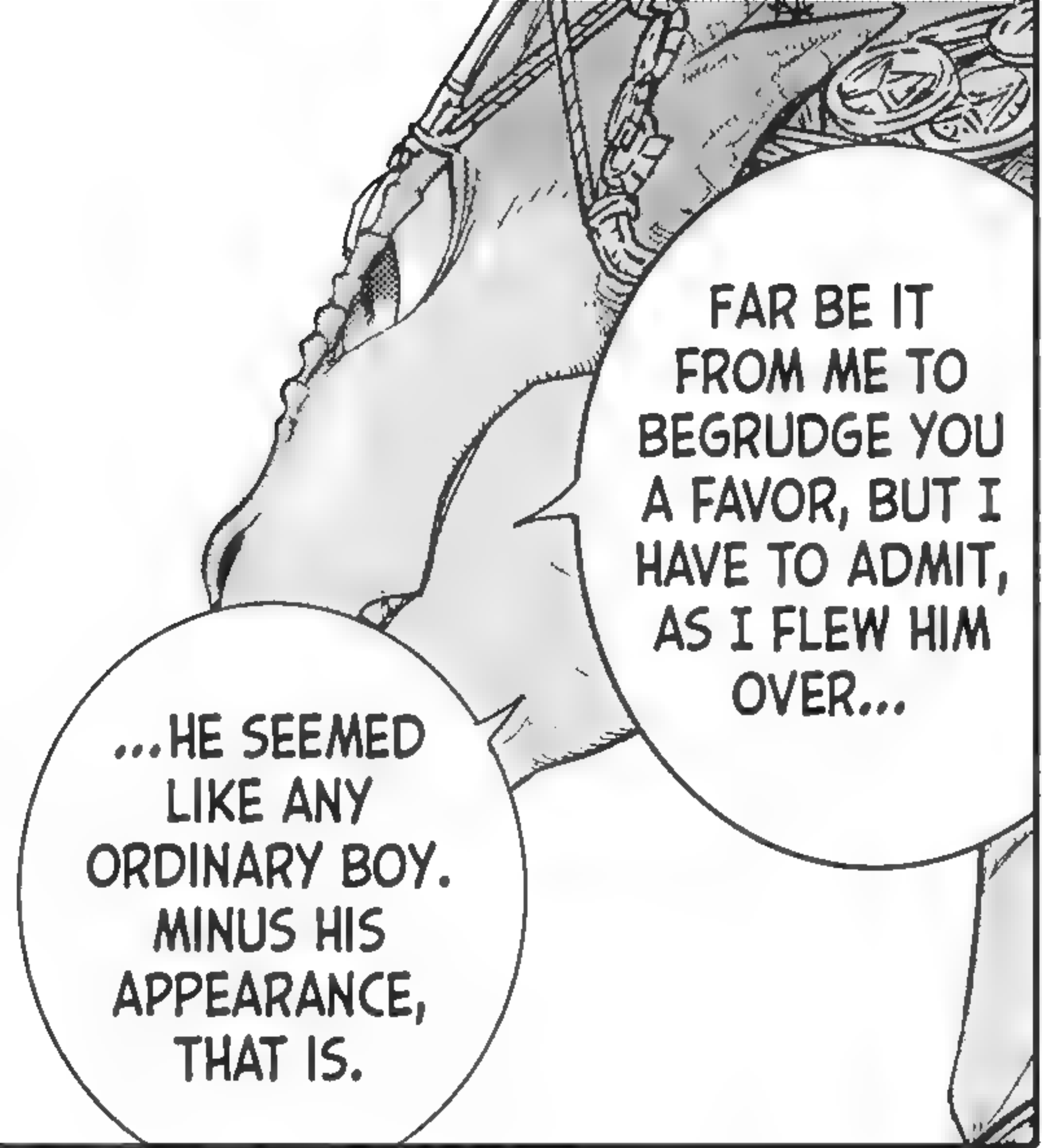
I MAY  
STILL BE  
JUST A  
TRAINEE...



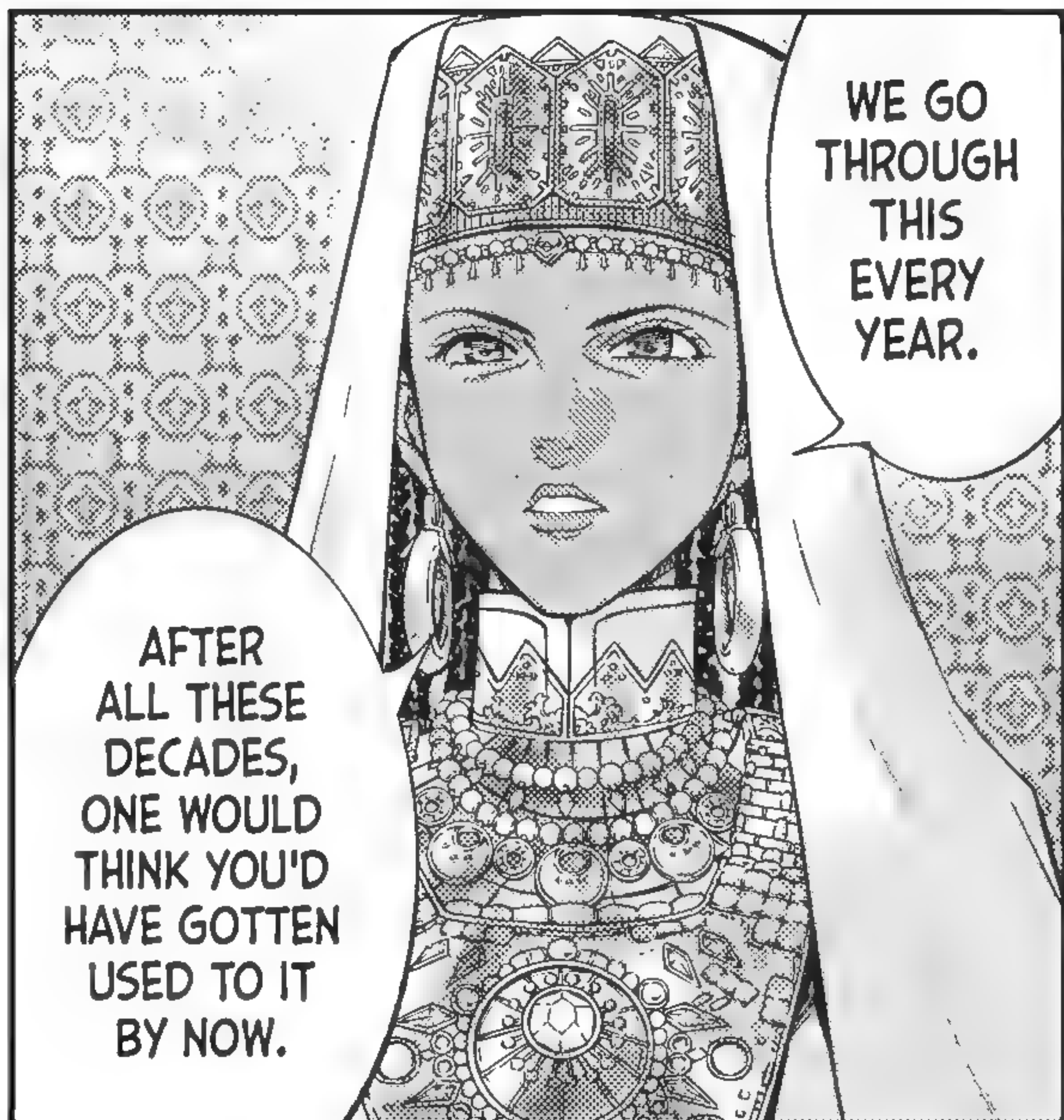
THEO'S  
HERE. HE  
PASSED  
BY JUST  
NOW...











WE GO THROUGH THIS EVERY YEAR.



MY TUMMY HURTS.



ZIP!

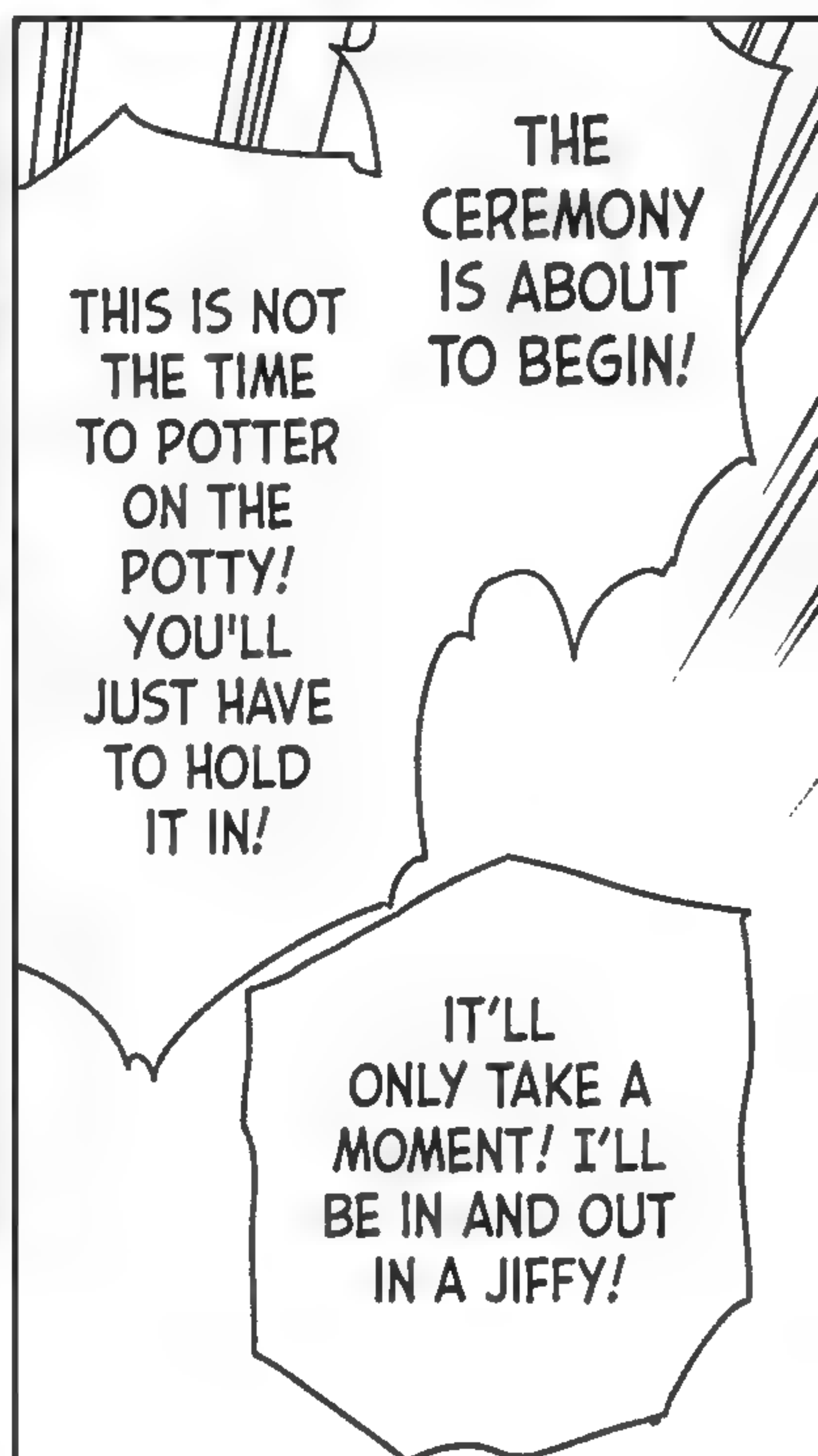
MAYBE I OUGHT TO GO REFRESH MYSELF.



AND I WON'T. I HATE SPEAKING IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE.



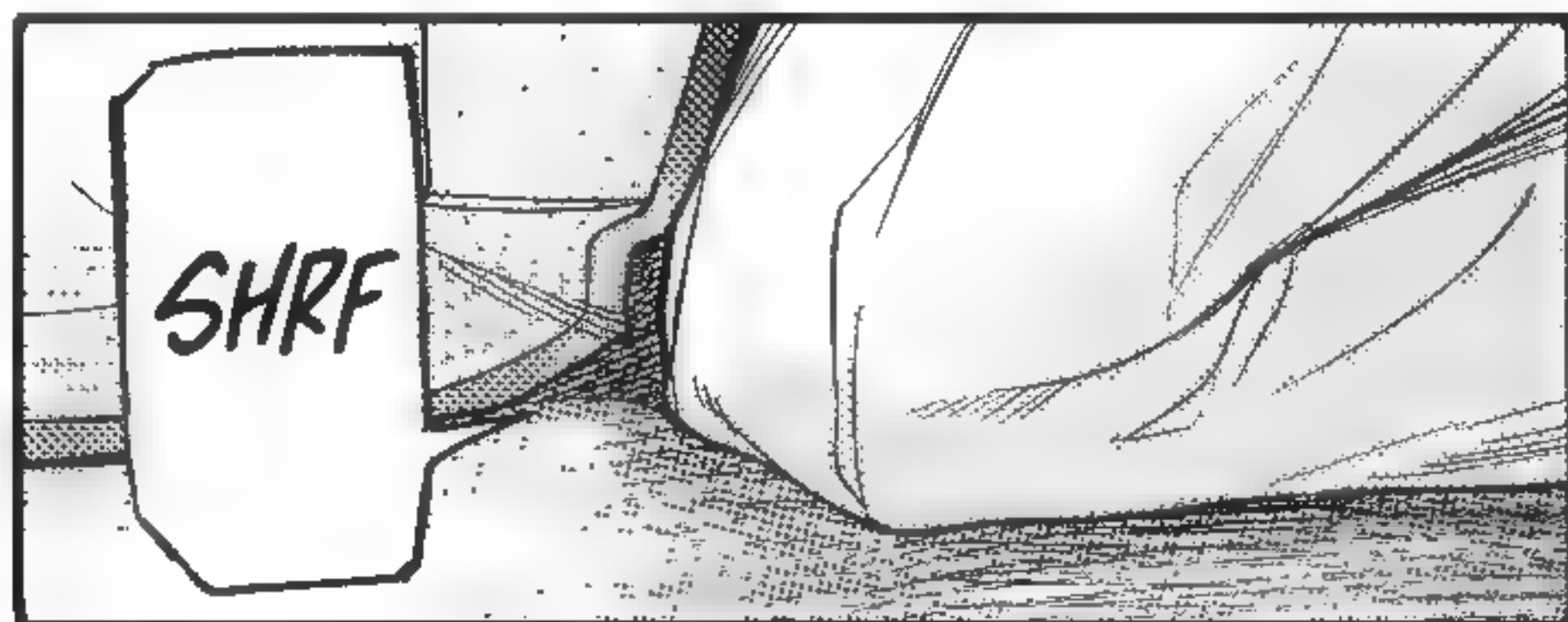
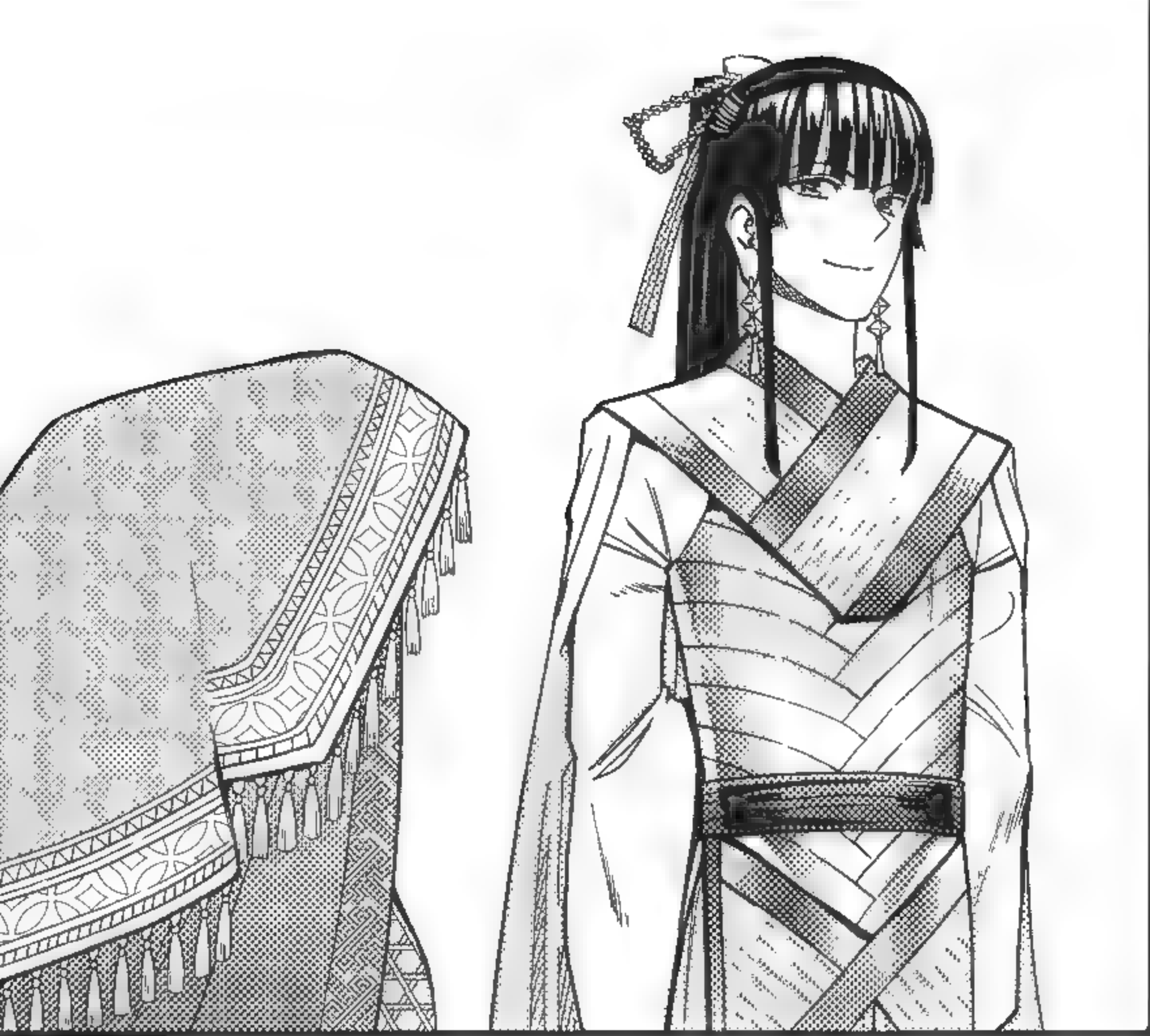
...BUT I MUST WONDER HOW APPROPRIATE IT IS FOR TWO ESTEEMED LADIES TO DISCUSS DELICATE MATTERS SO AUDIBLY.



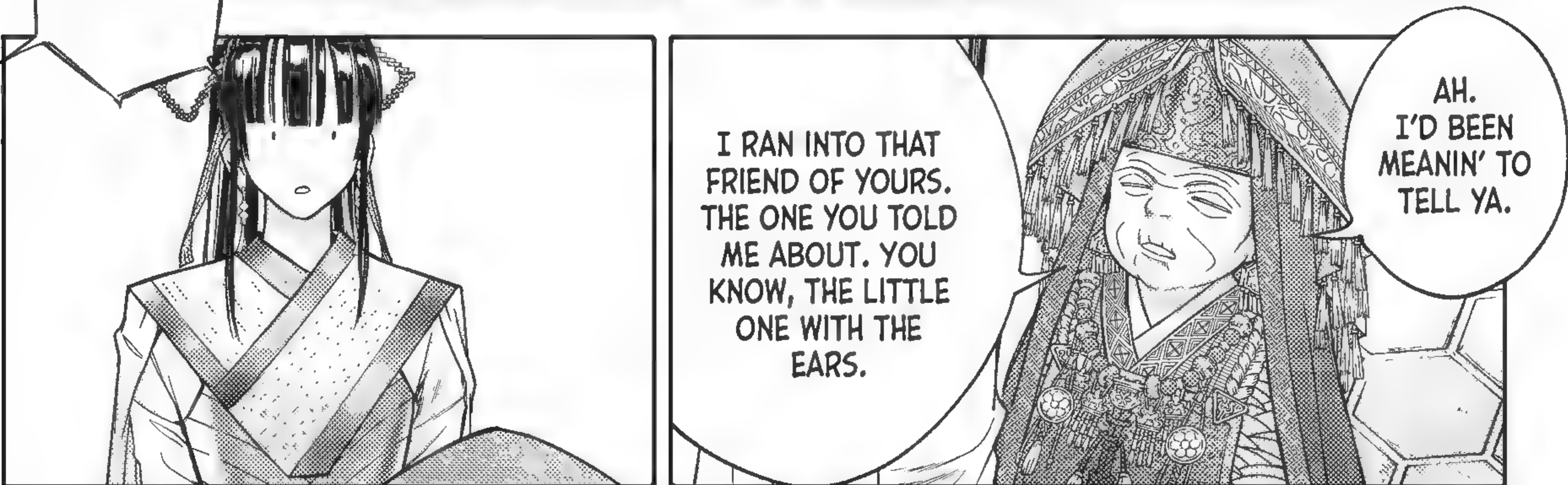
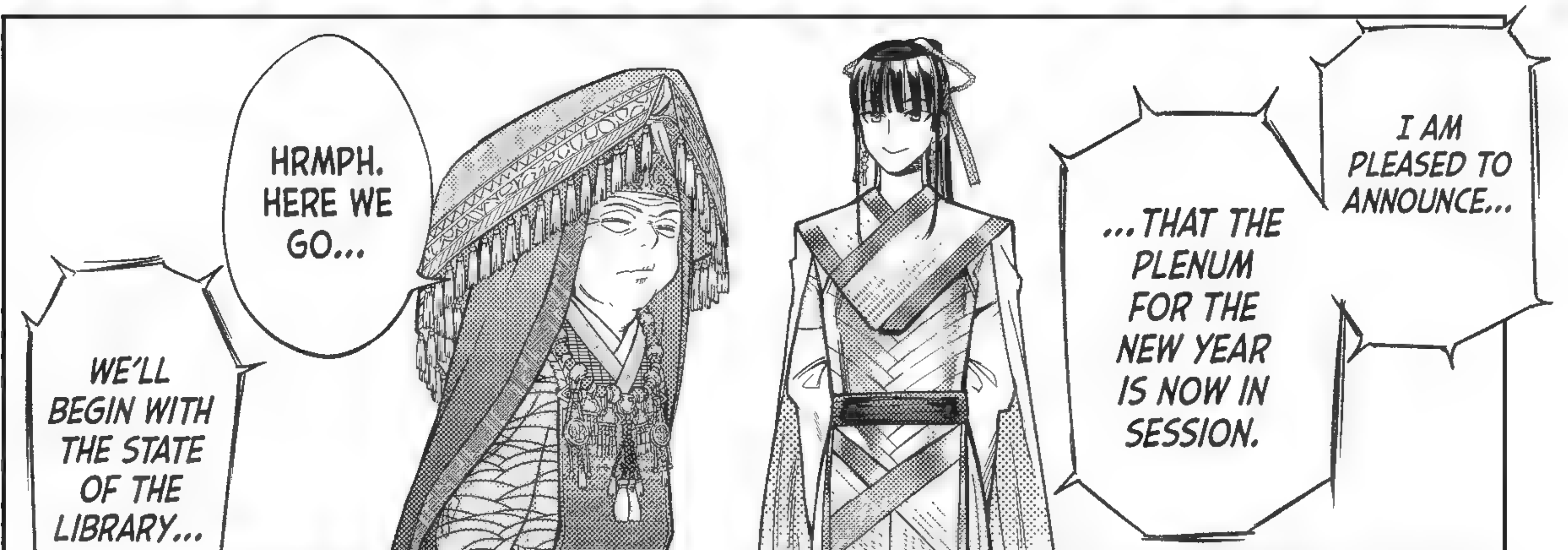
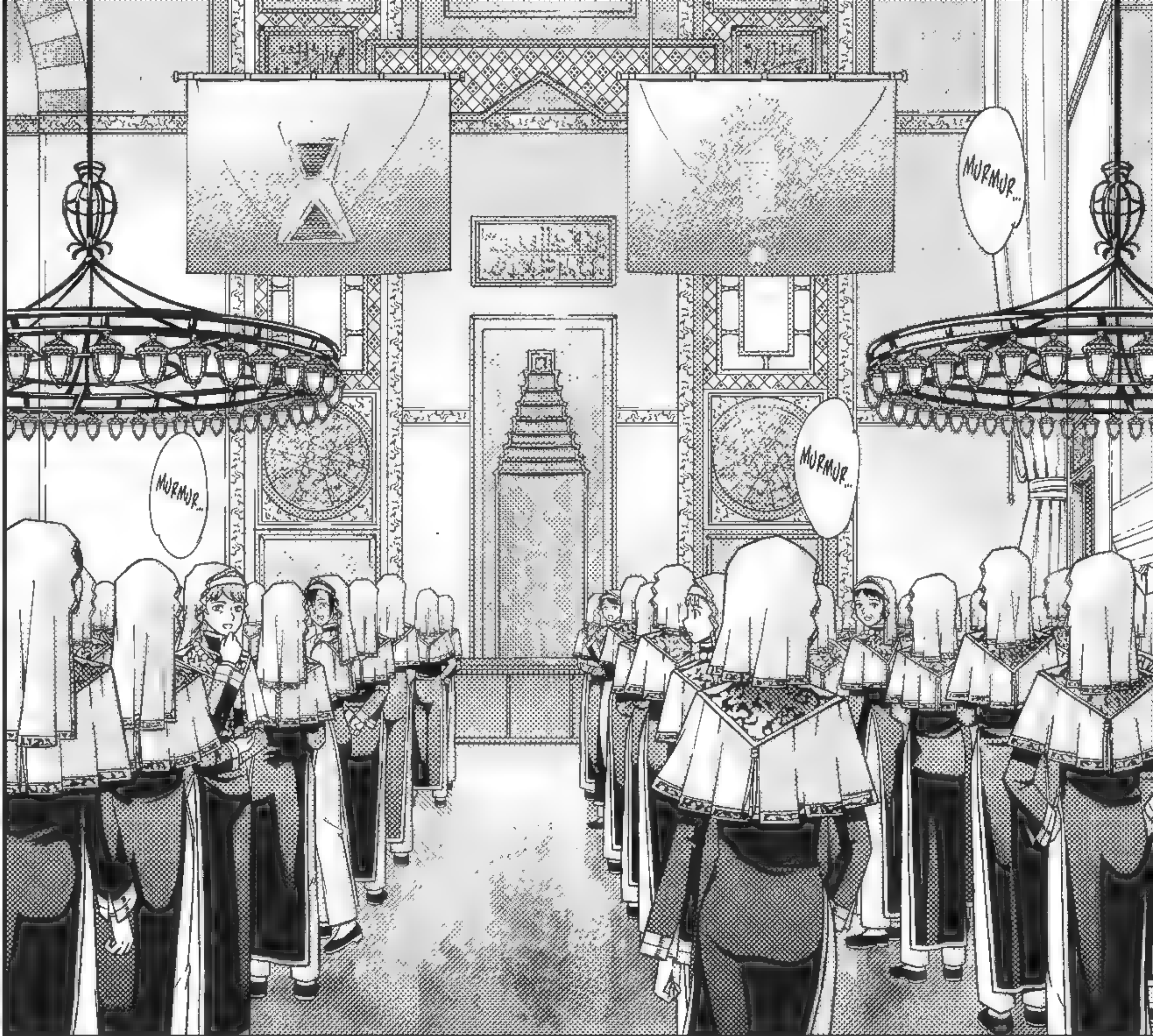
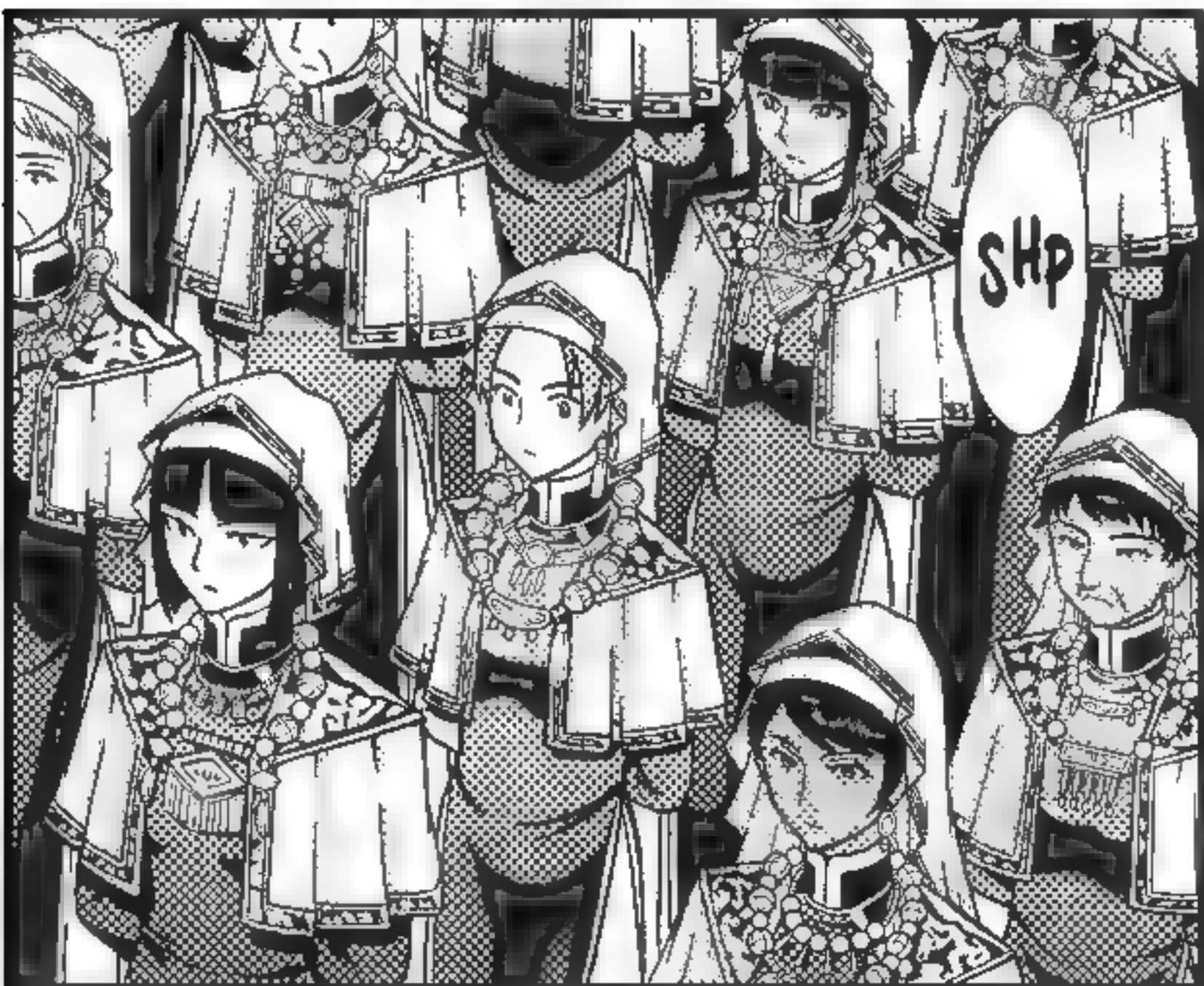
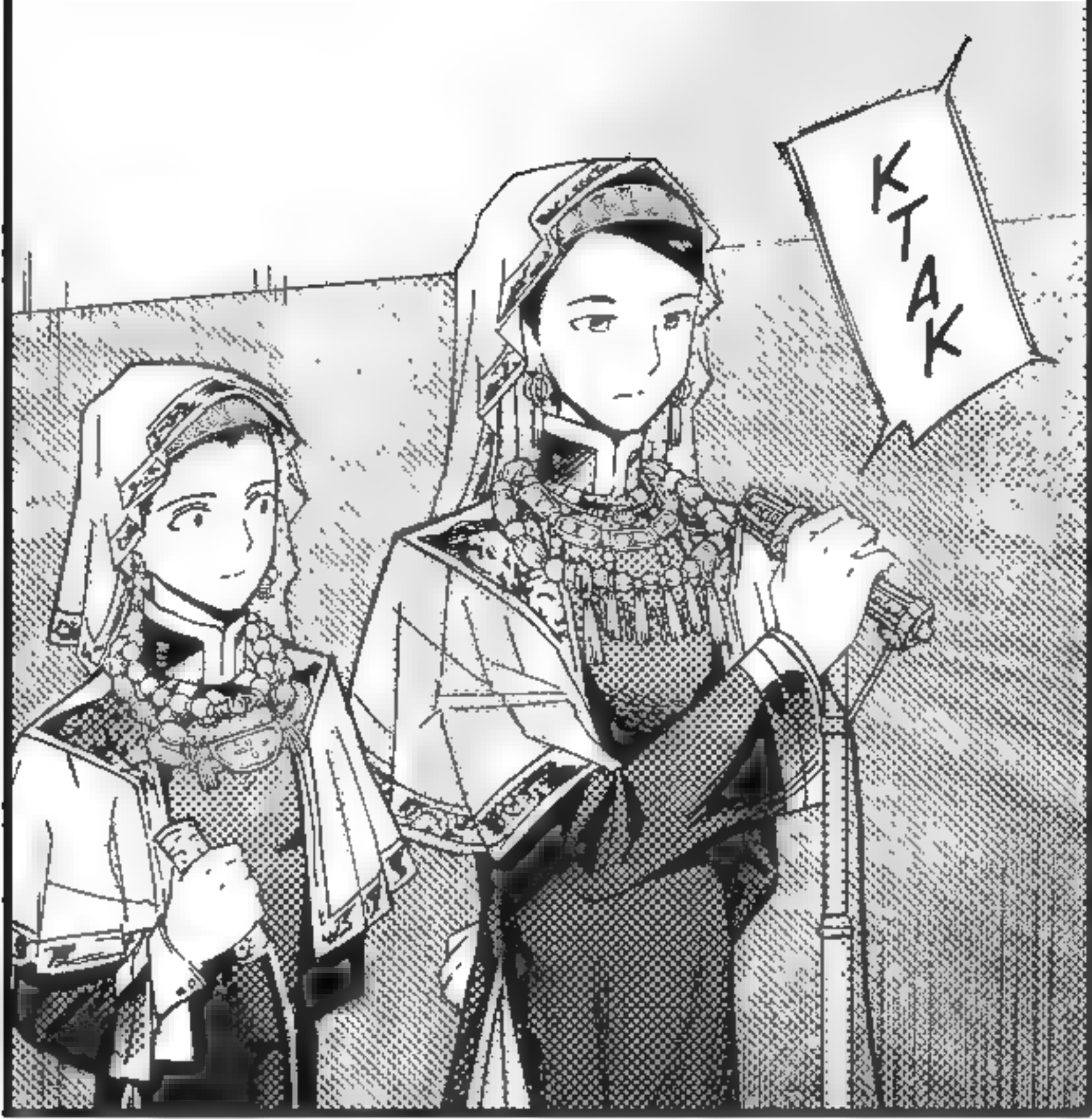
THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO POTTER ON THE POTTY! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO HOLD IT IN!

IT'LL ONLY TAKE A MOMENT! I'LL BE IN AND OUT IN A JIFFY!











...BUT WITH  
MANA LIKE  
THAT, THERE  
WASN'T MUCH  
NEED FOR  
CHANCE.

I SUPPOSE  
I WAS LEFT  
ITCHIN' TO  
KNOW MORE. I  
SET OUT FOR A  
STROLL, HOPING  
I MIGHT CHANCE  
ACROSS HIM...

THE EXAM  
INTERVIEW.  
THAT WAS  
THE FIRST  
TIME.

BUT  
PLEASE  
TELL  
ME, HOW  
DID YOU  
MEET?

And who  
said anything  
about a  
synthespirit's  
assault?

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN YOU  
"KNEW  
IT"?

I CAN'T SAY  
WHETHER  
THAT'S A  
GOOD OR  
BAD THING,  
THOUGH.

...ALONG  
WITH A NEW  
GROUP  
OF  
KOHKWA  
NUMBER-  
ING...

AND THIS  
YEAR, WE  
WELCOME  
TO OUR  
RANKS  
27 NEW  
KAFNA...

I SEE WHAT  
YOU WERE  
SAYING. THERE  
IS INDEED  
SOMETHING  
ABOUT HIM.

PARDON ME.  
I MEANT  
SIMPLY, "HOW  
INTERESTING"...

IF THE WAY THE  
BOY AND I MET  
WERE IN A NOVEL,  
I'D PUT IT BACK  
ON THE SHELF.  
PLOT'S TOO  
CONVENIENT.

NOTHING IS  
MORE EXCITING  
THAN A STORY WITH  
AN ENSEMBLE CAST,  
WITH THAT CLIMACTIC  
SCENE WHEN THE  
PROTAGONISTS  
FINALLY MEET!

I AM.

YOU  
SEEM  
QUITE  
PLEASED  
TO HEAR  
IT.

YOU  
NEED NOT  
PRETEND.

SINCE THE DAY  
THE EMISSARY WAS  
SEALED AWAY, NOT  
A MOMENT HAS  
PASSED IN WHICH  
YOU HAVEN'T  
DAZZLED THE  
IMAGINATION.

NOW, IF  
YOU'LL  
EXCUSE ME,  
I HAVE TO GO  
ACT HIGH AND  
MIGHTY FOR  
A TICK.

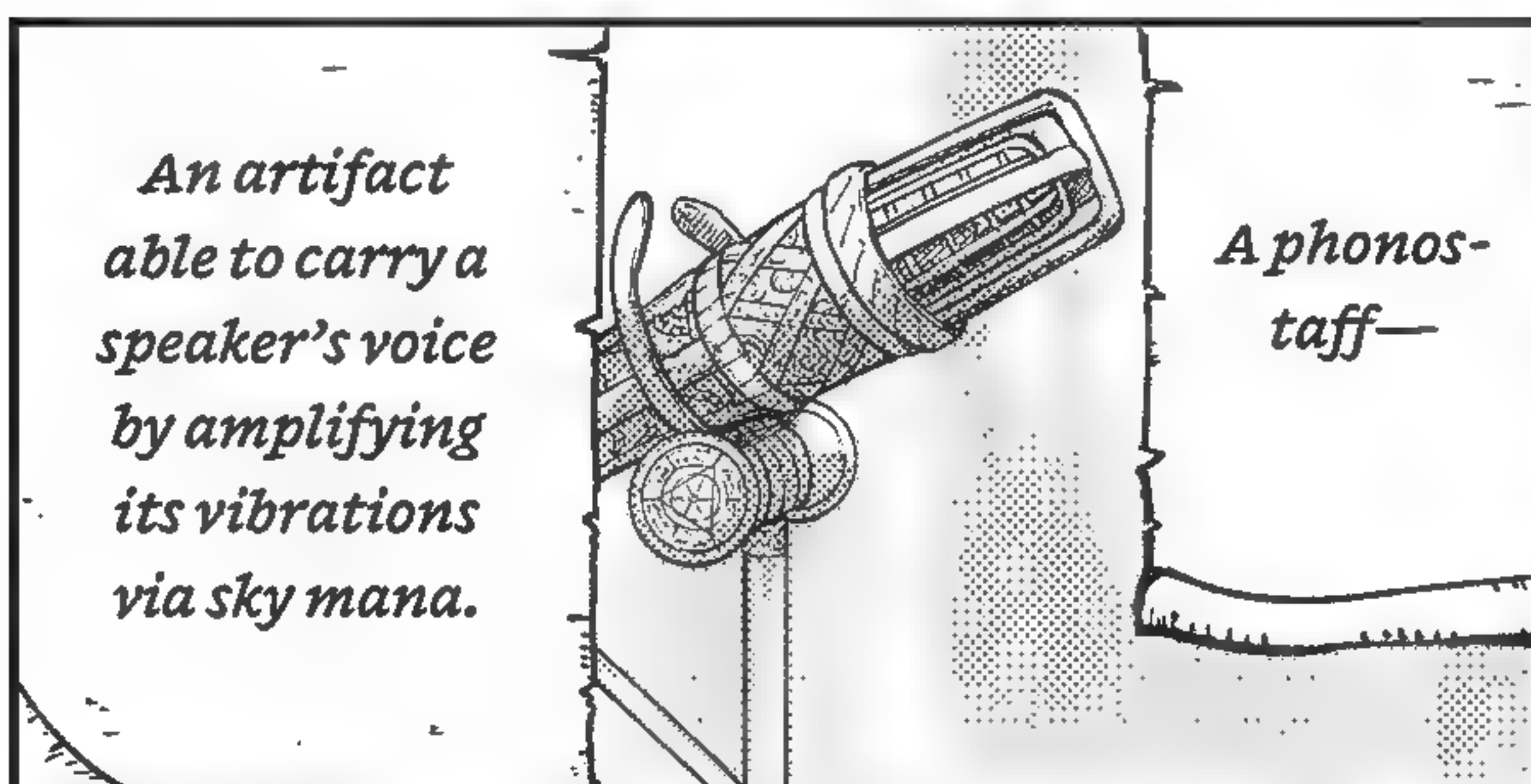
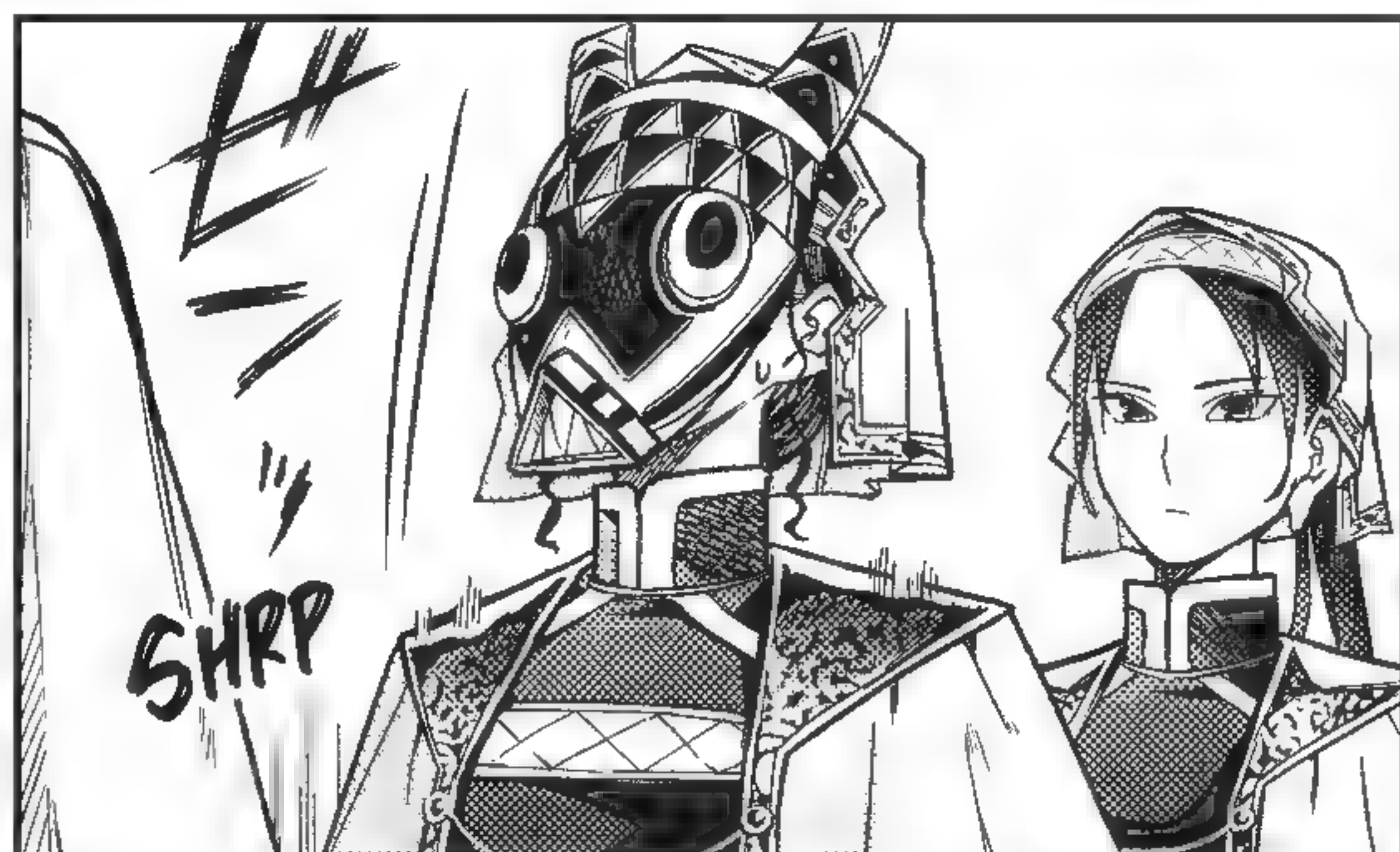
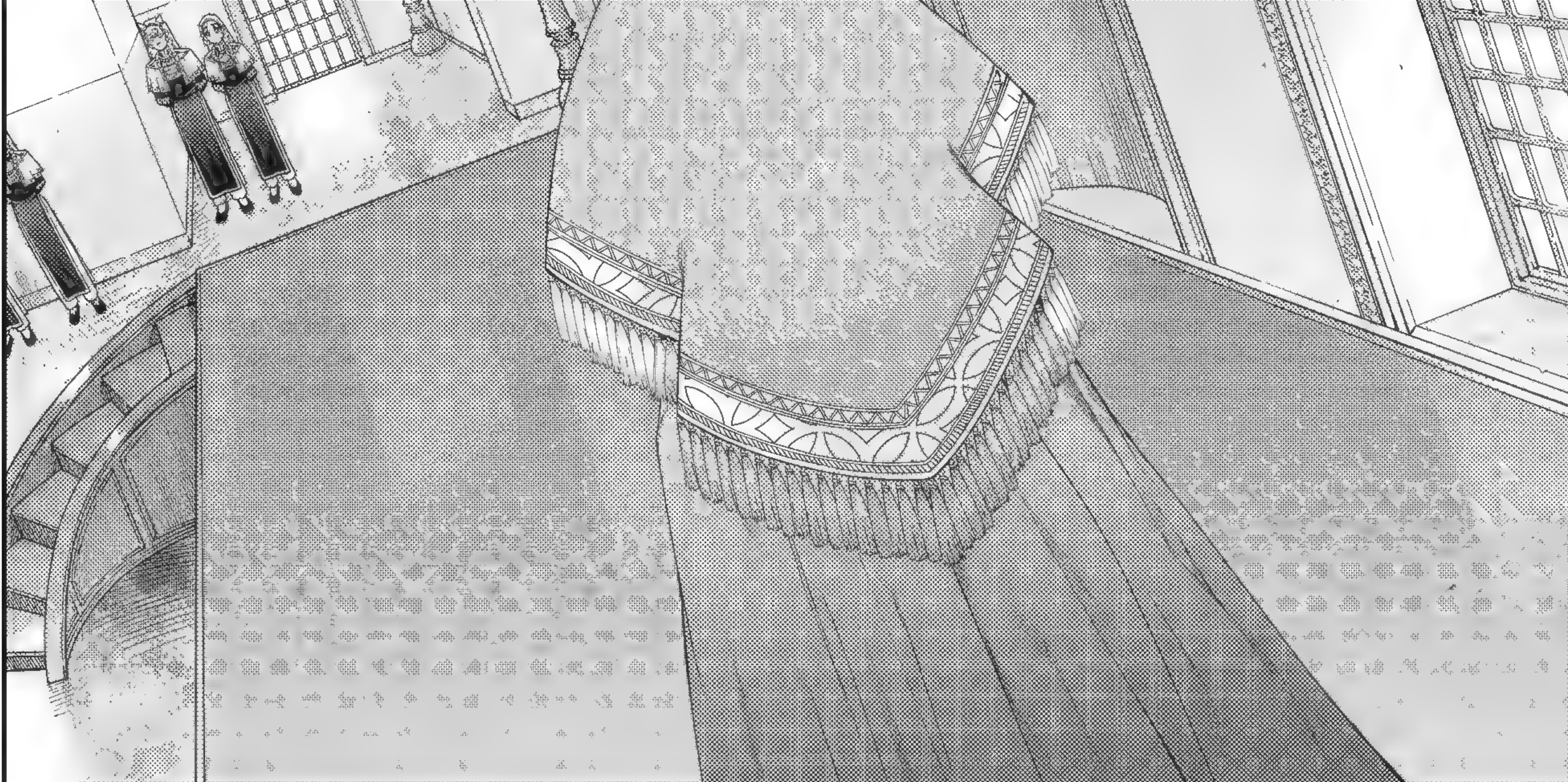
THAT IS  
MY JOB,  
AFTER  
ALL.

AND  
WITHOUT  
FURTHER  
ADO...

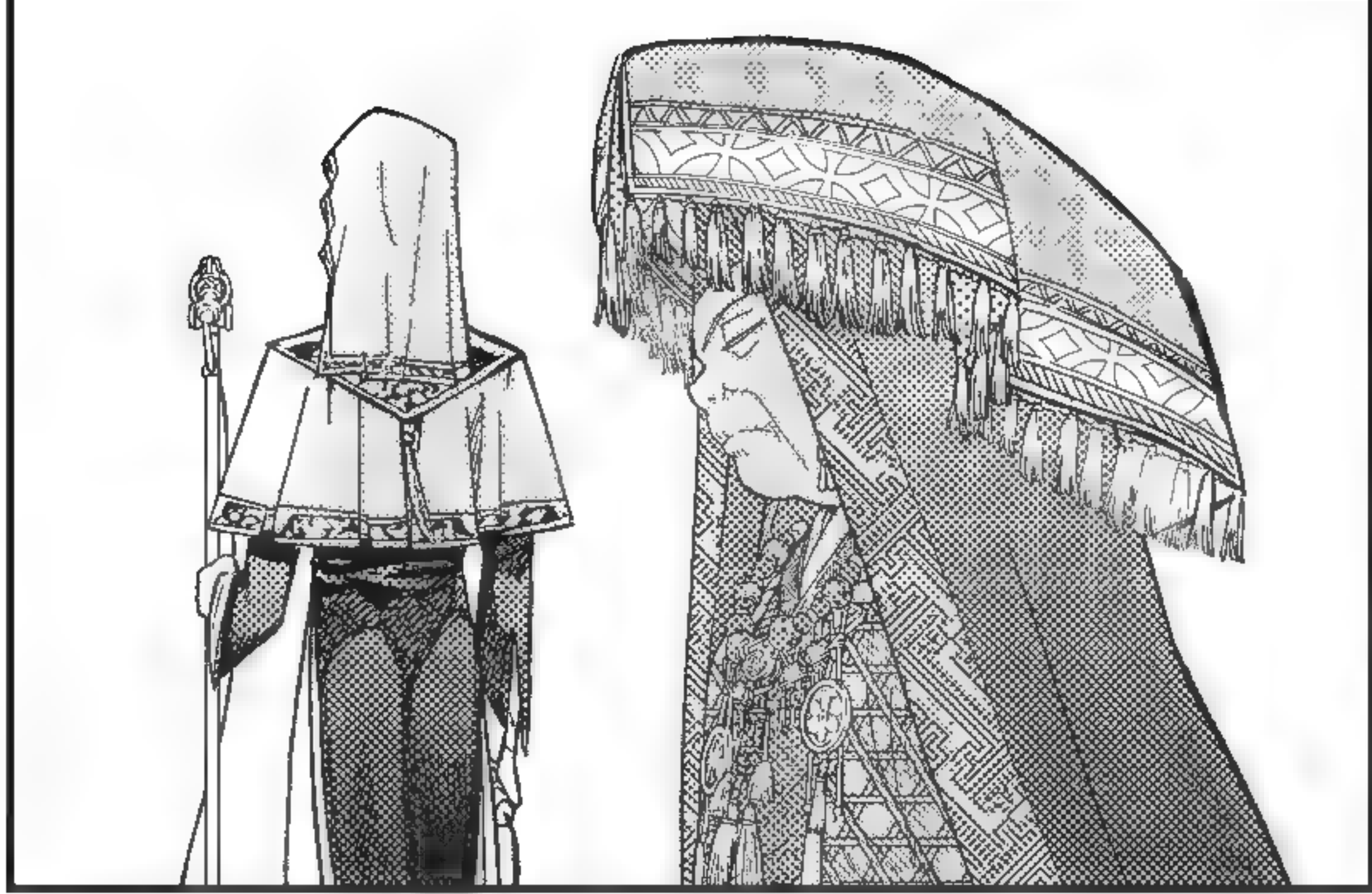
...A WORD  
FROM THE  
LIBRARY'S  
GENERAL  
REPRESENTA-  
TIVE, OUR  
VERY OWN  
KOMAKO  
KAULIKK!

HRMPH.







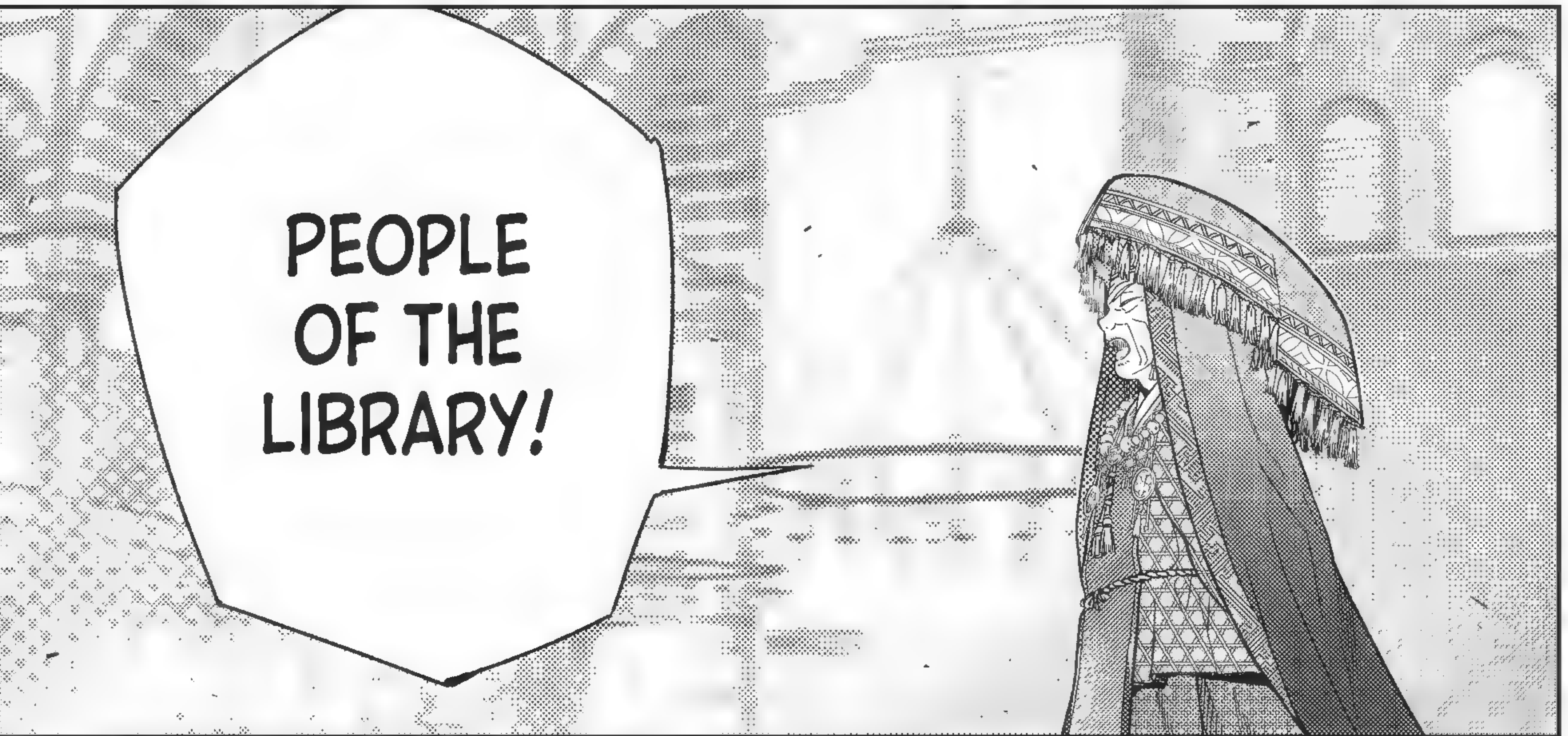


FFFT...



TAKE IT AND GO.

I'VE NO NEED FOR BAUBLES.



PEOPLE OF THE LIBRARY!

...OTHERS OF YOU SHALL HEAR IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

BUT I ASK THAT YOU ALL TAKE IT FIRMLY TO HEART.



RMBL

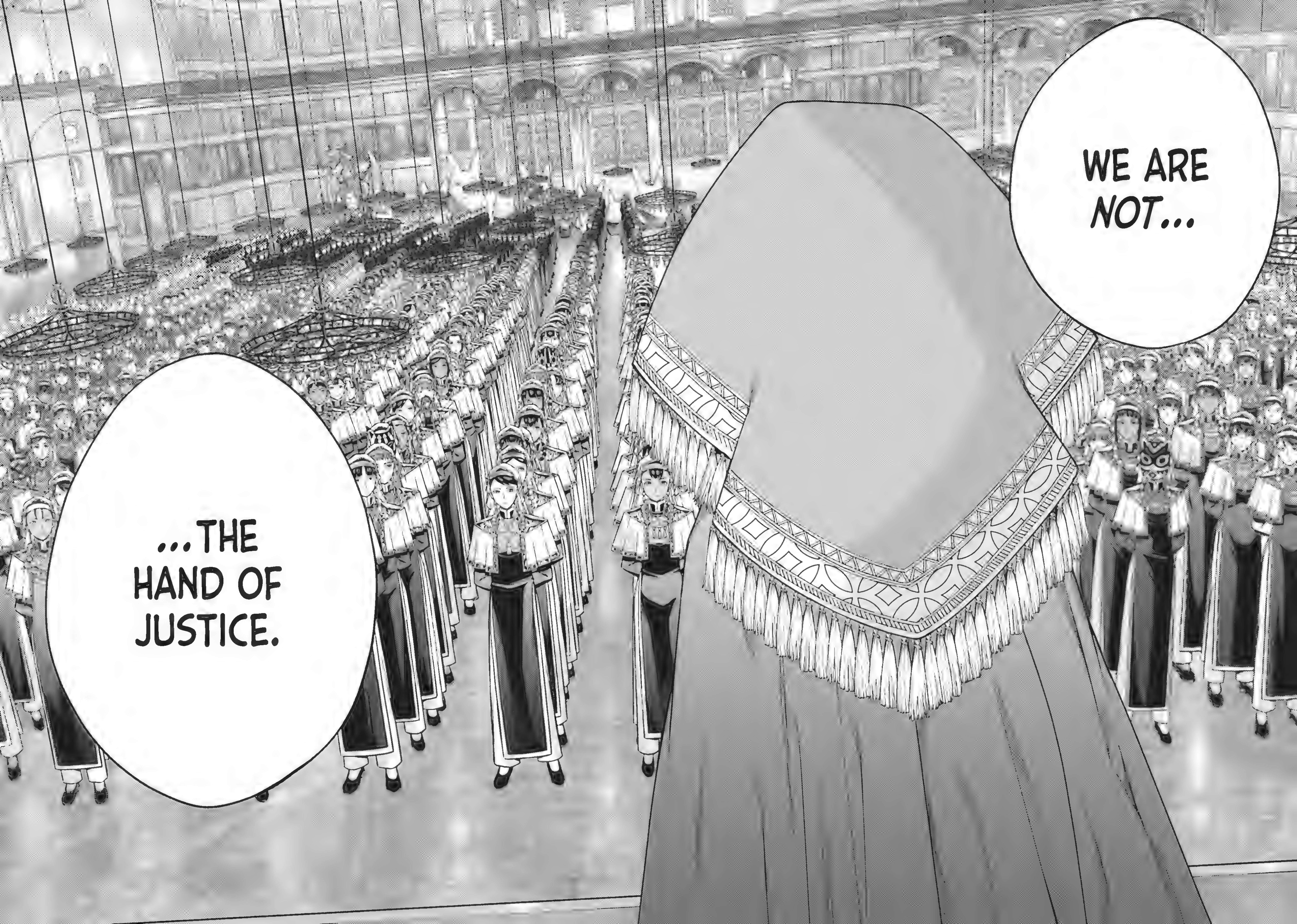
I'LL NOT BORE YOU WITH AN OLD WOMAN'S RAMBLINGS.

THERE IS BUT ONE THING I HAVE TO SAY.



JOLT





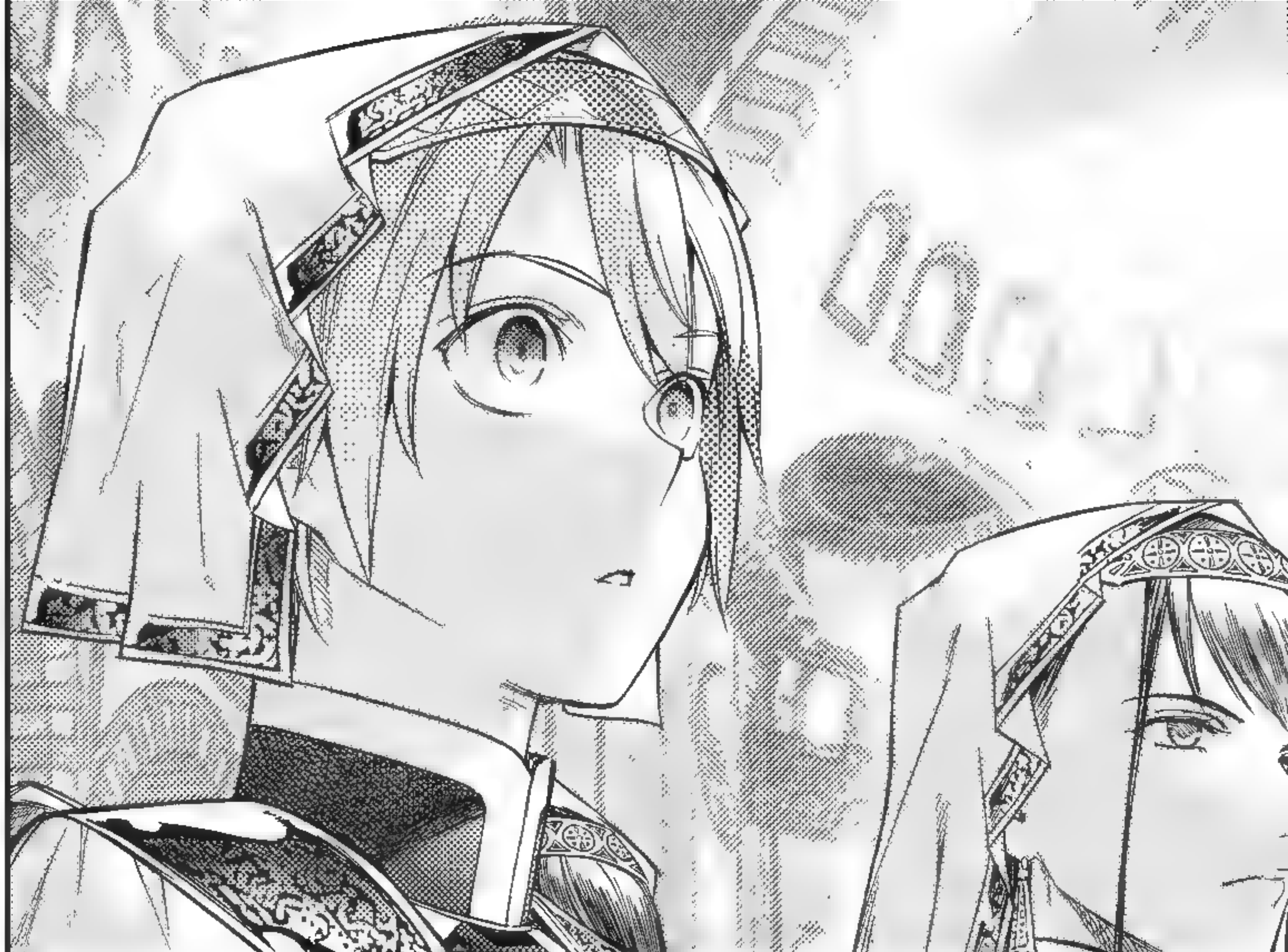
WE ARE  
NOT...

...THE  
HAND OF  
JUSTICE.





THERE ARE MANY  
IN THIS WORLD  
WHO SEEK TO  
DISMANTLE THIS  
LIBRARY.



PERHAPS THEY  
ARE THE ONES  
WHO ARE JUST,  
AND IT IS WE  
WHO ARE IN  
THE WRONG.

IN THAT SENSE,  
ARE WE NOT A  
FORCE OF EVIL,  
HOARDING FOR  
OURSELVES  
OBJECTS OTHERS  
HOLD DEAR?

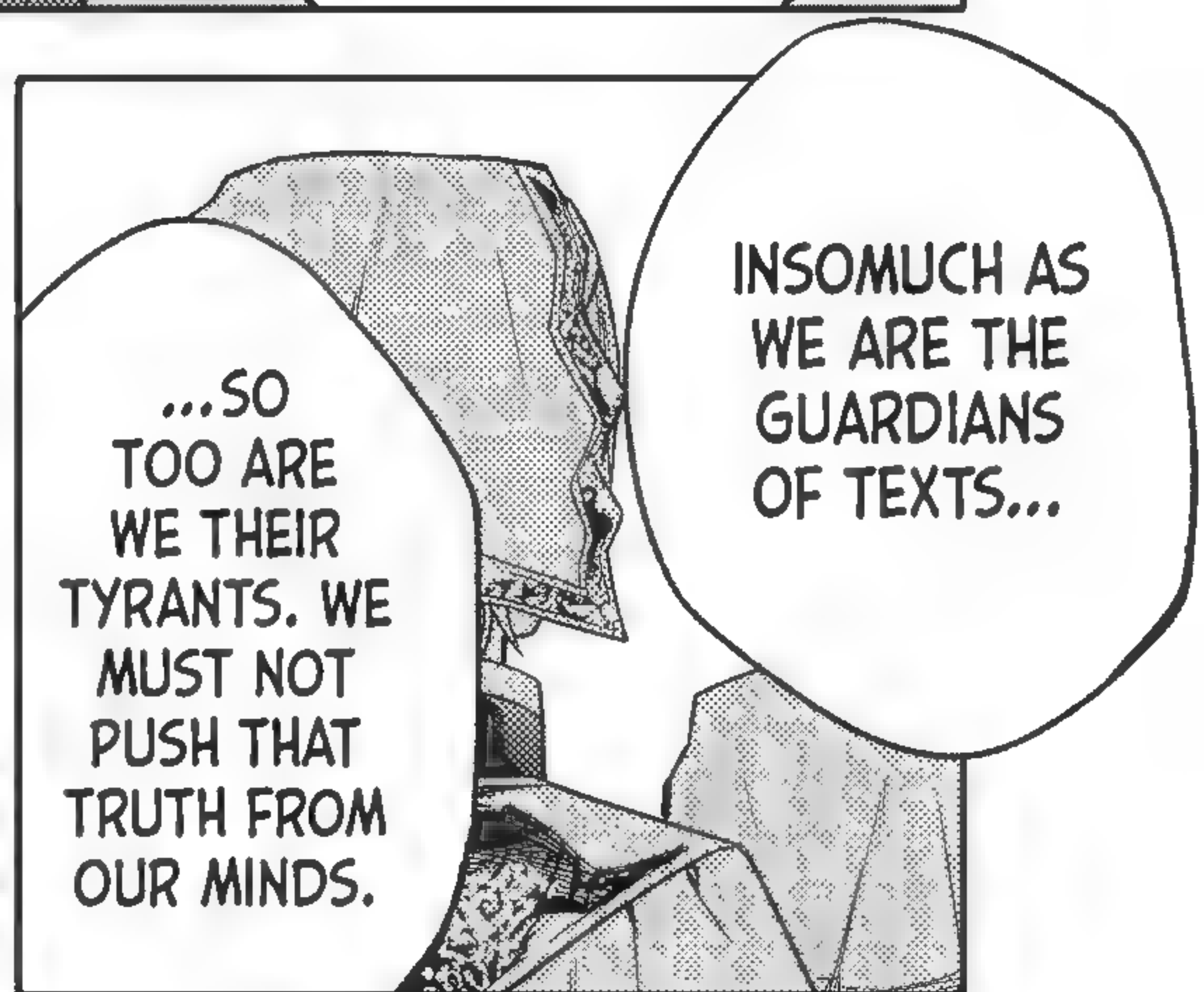
IT IS TRUE THAT  
A LARGE NUMBER  
OF THE TEXTS  
WE WATCH OVER  
WERE ONCE PRIZED  
POSSESSIONS OF  
OTHERS.



...SEEDS  
JUSTIFICATIONS...

...FOR  
BLINDLY  
STRAYING  
FROM THOSE  
SELSAME  
IDEALS.

TOO MUCH  
CONFIDENCE  
IN ONE'S OWN  
RIGHTEOUS-  
NESS...



...SO  
TOO ARE  
WE THEIR  
TYRANTS. WE  
MUST NOT  
PUSH THAT  
TRUTH FROM  
OUR MINDS.

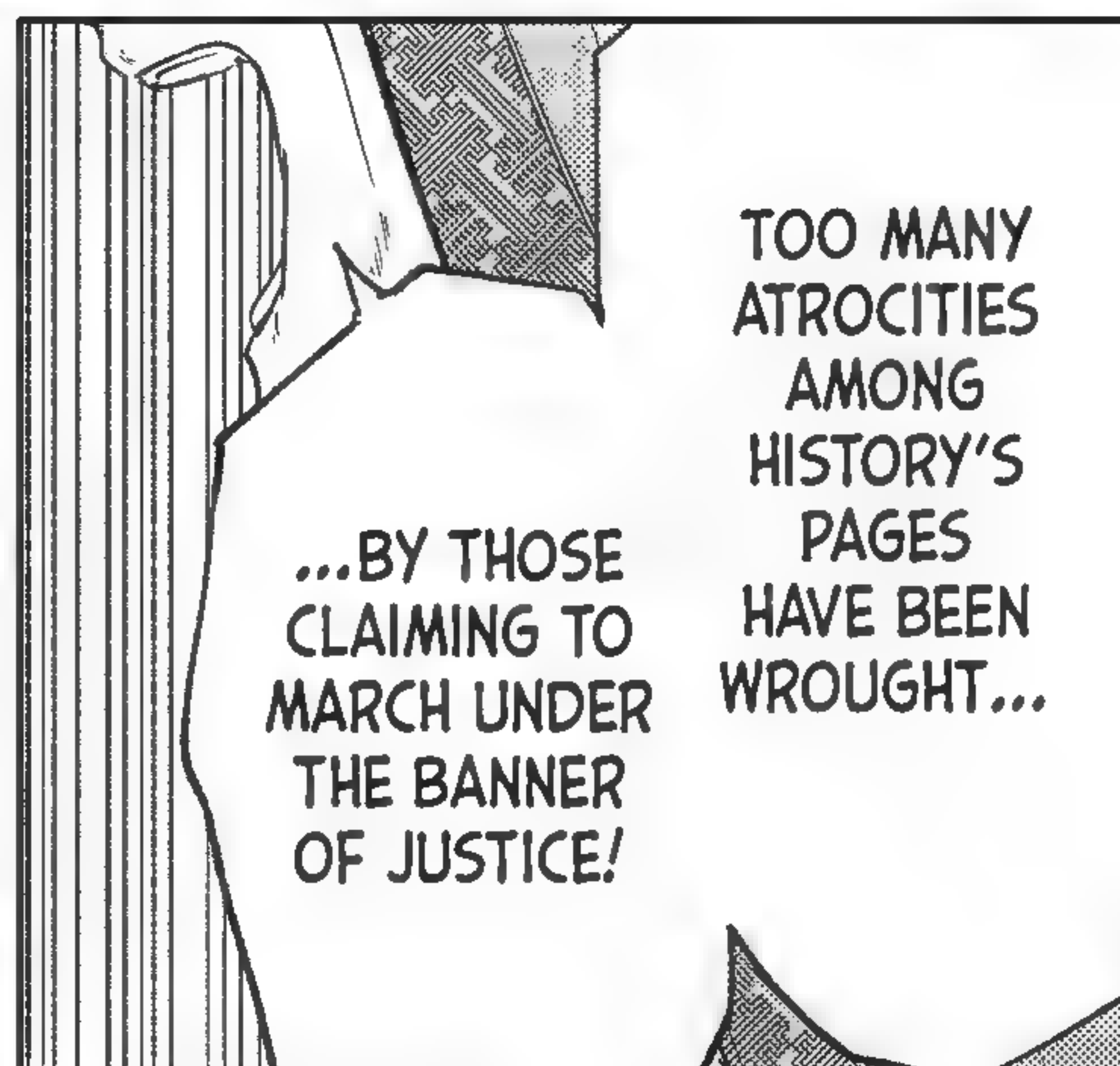
INSOMUCH AS  
WE ARE THE  
GUARDIANS  
OF TEXTS...



WE HAVE  
BUT ONE  
CALLING!

WE ARE  
GUARDIANS,  
NOT  
RULERS!


SO SEAR  
THESE  
WORDS  
IN YOUR  
HEARTS  
AND  
MINDS!



...BY THOSE  
CLAIMING TO  
MARCH UNDER  
THE BANNER  
OF JUSTICE!

TOO MANY  
ATROCITIES  
AMONG  
HISTORY'S  
PAGES  
HAVE BEEN  
WROUGHT...





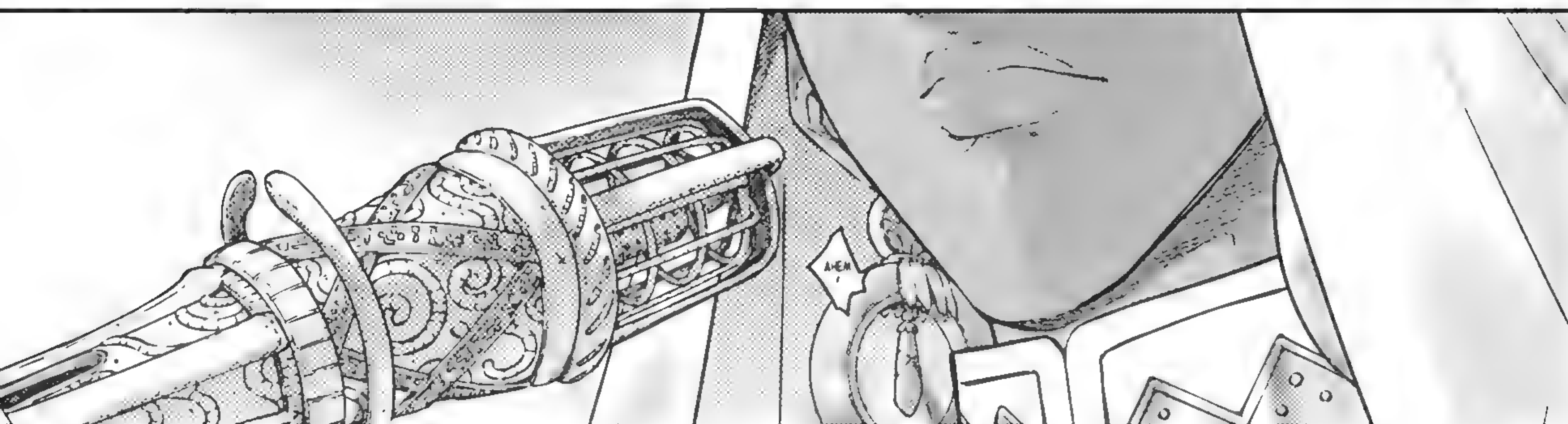
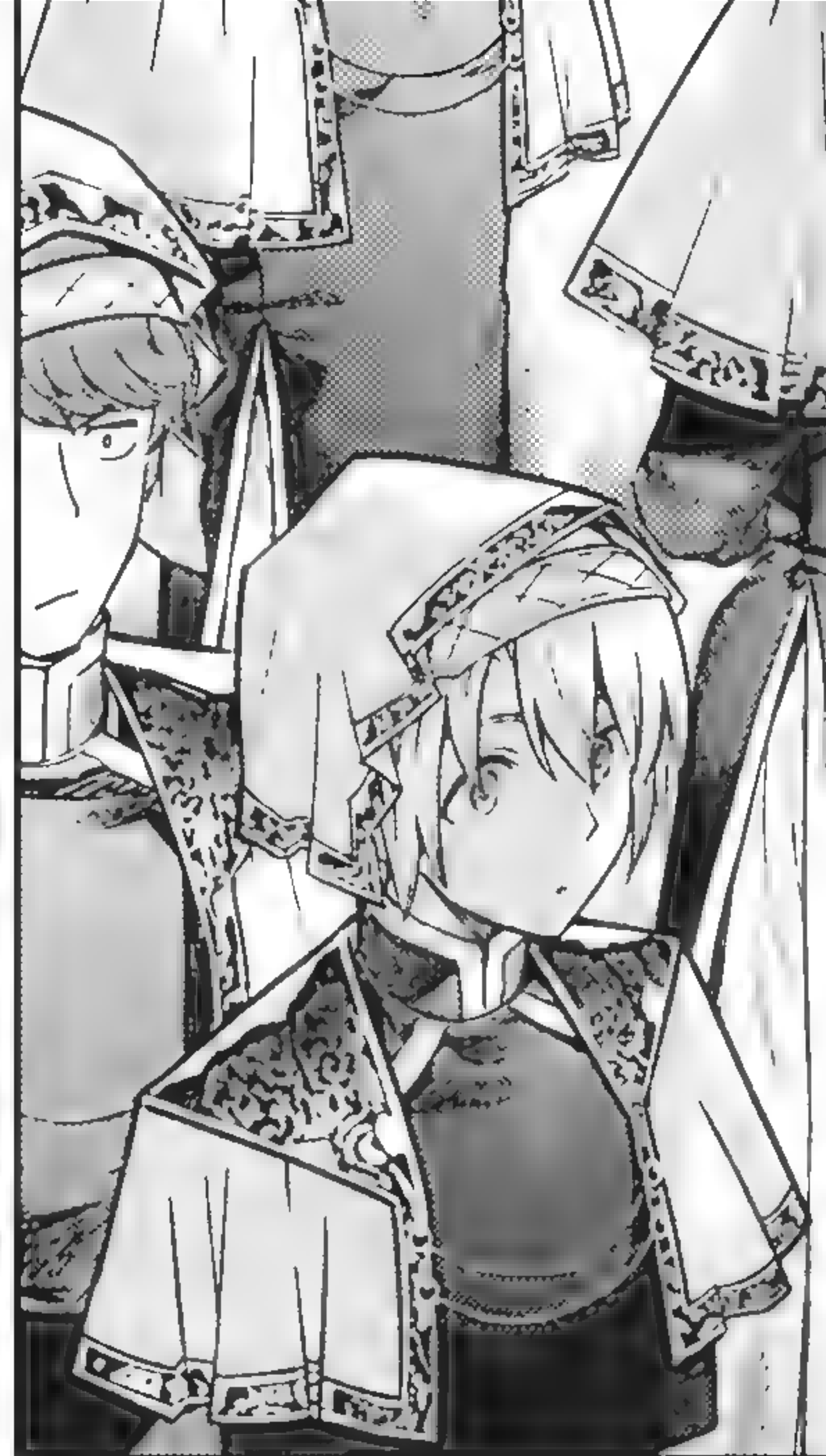
THE  
LIBRARY  
EXISTS  
FOR ONE  
PURPOSE  
ALONE!

WE  
PROTECT  
TEXTS!





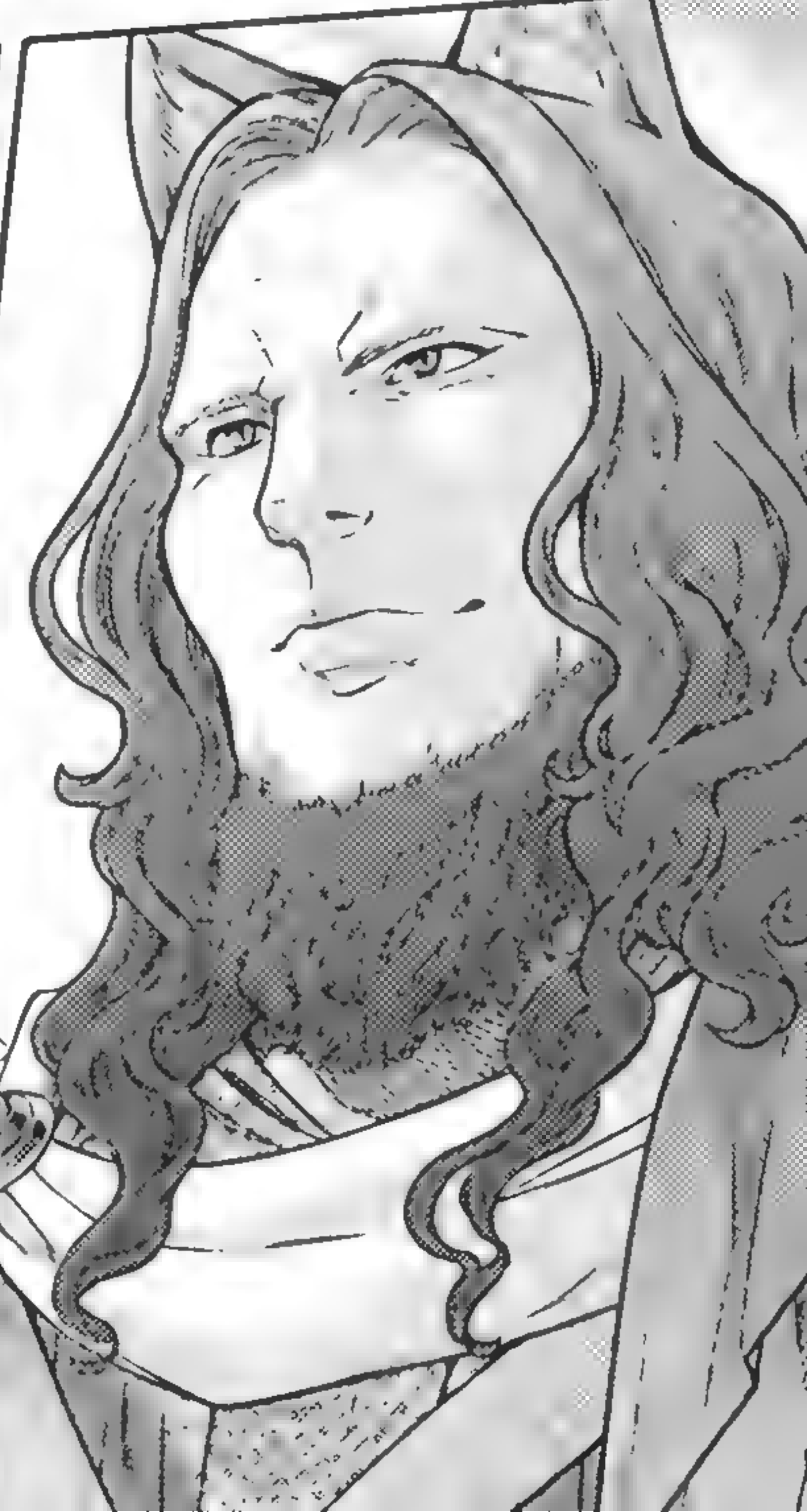
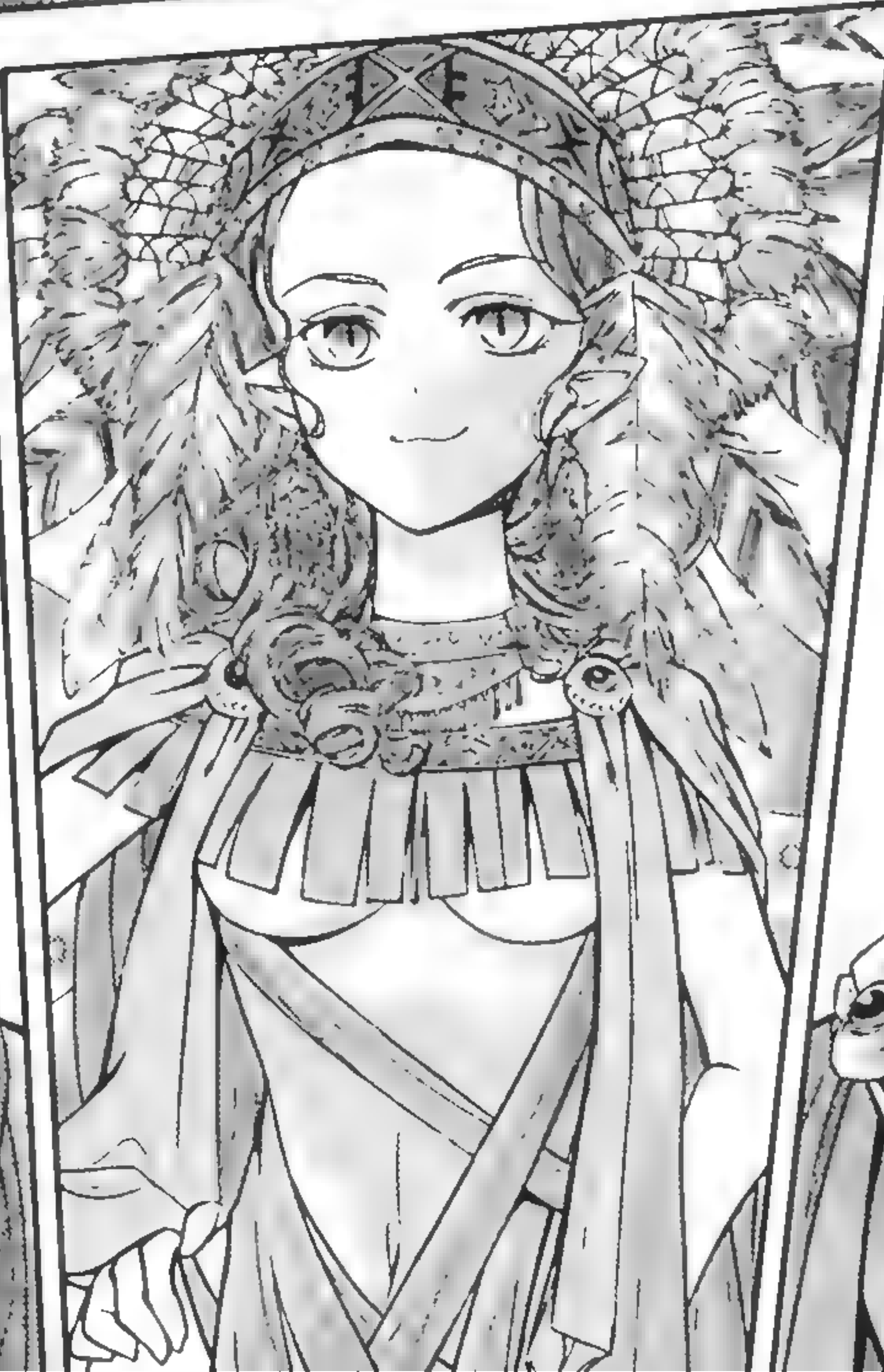
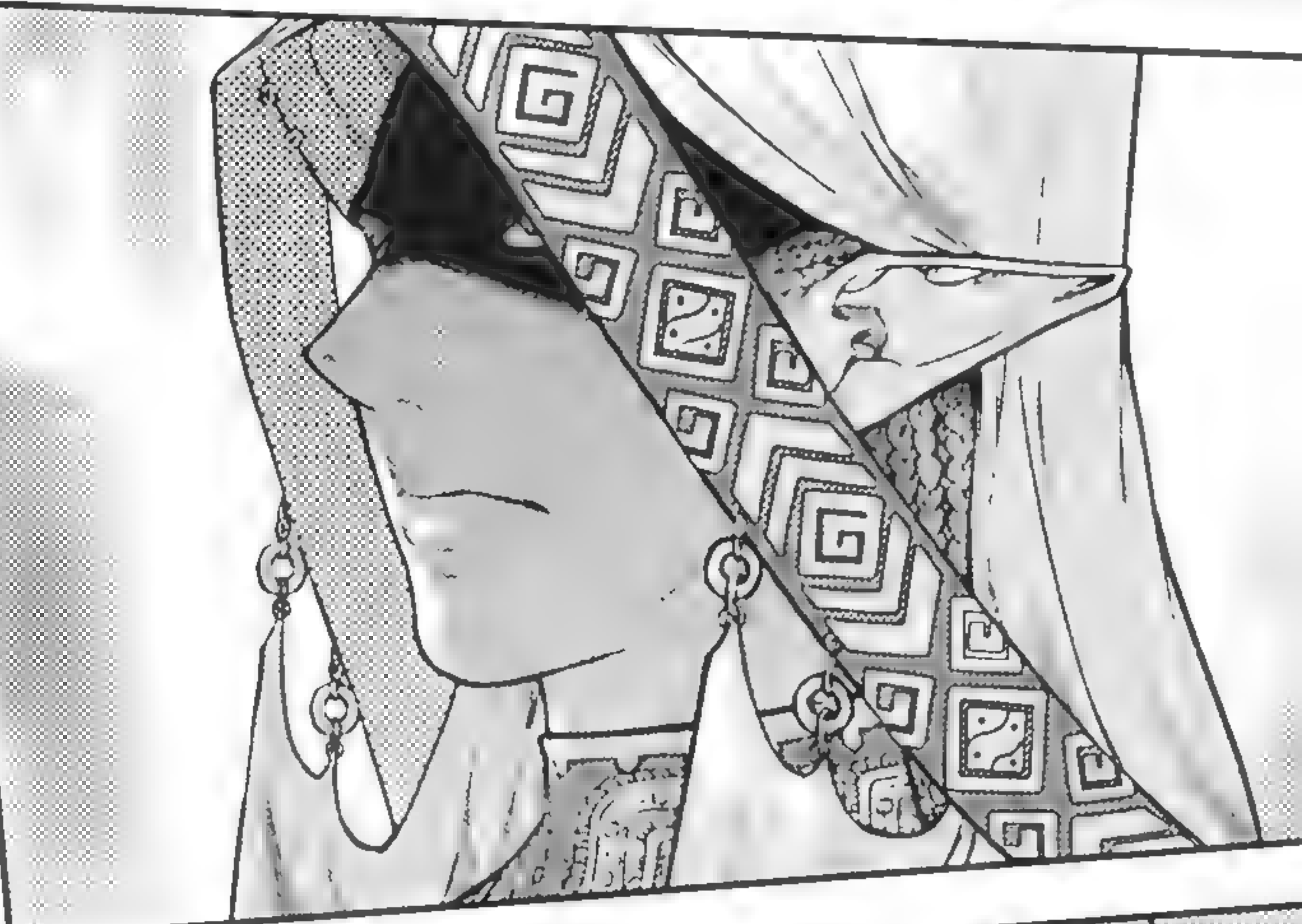
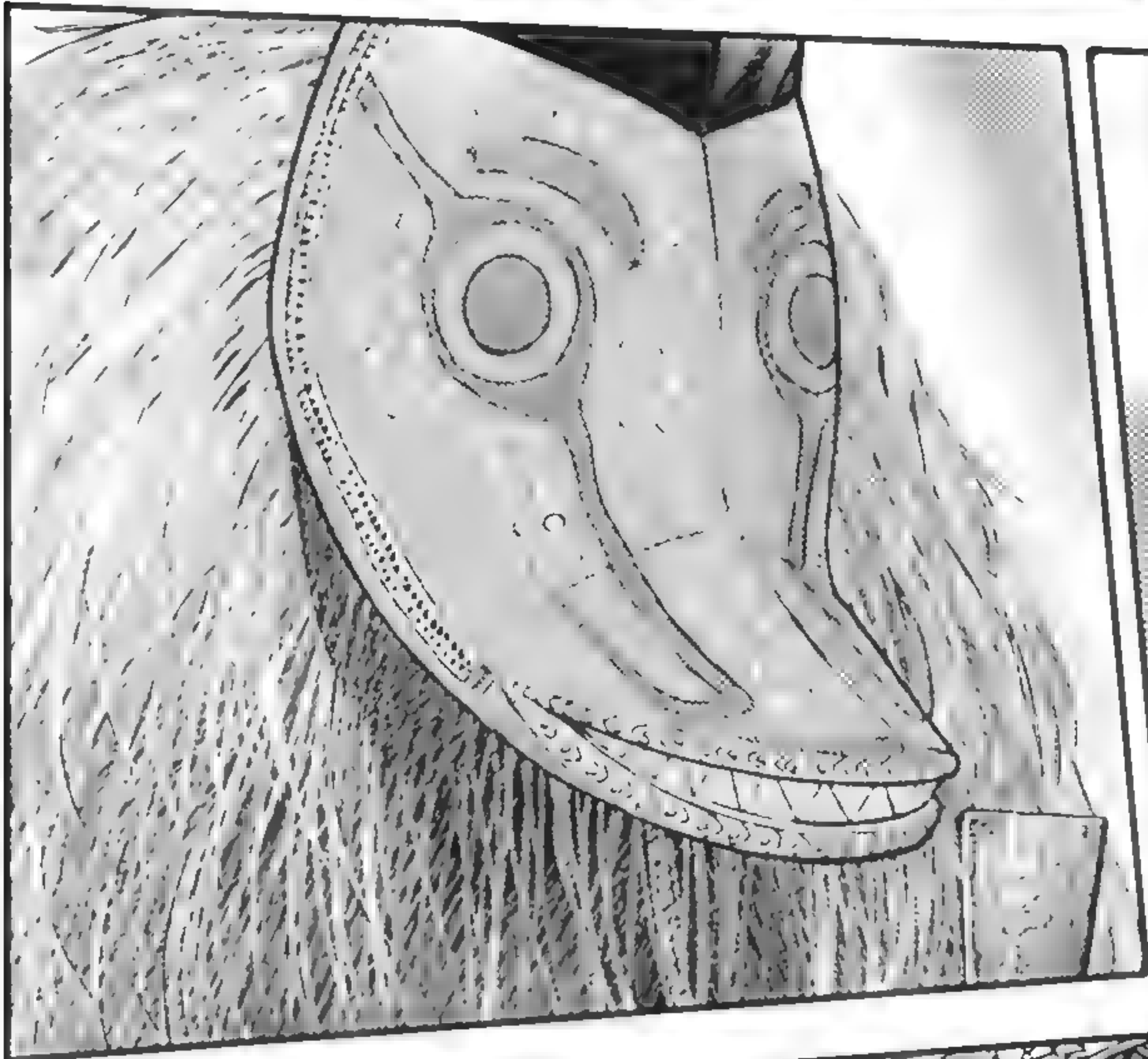
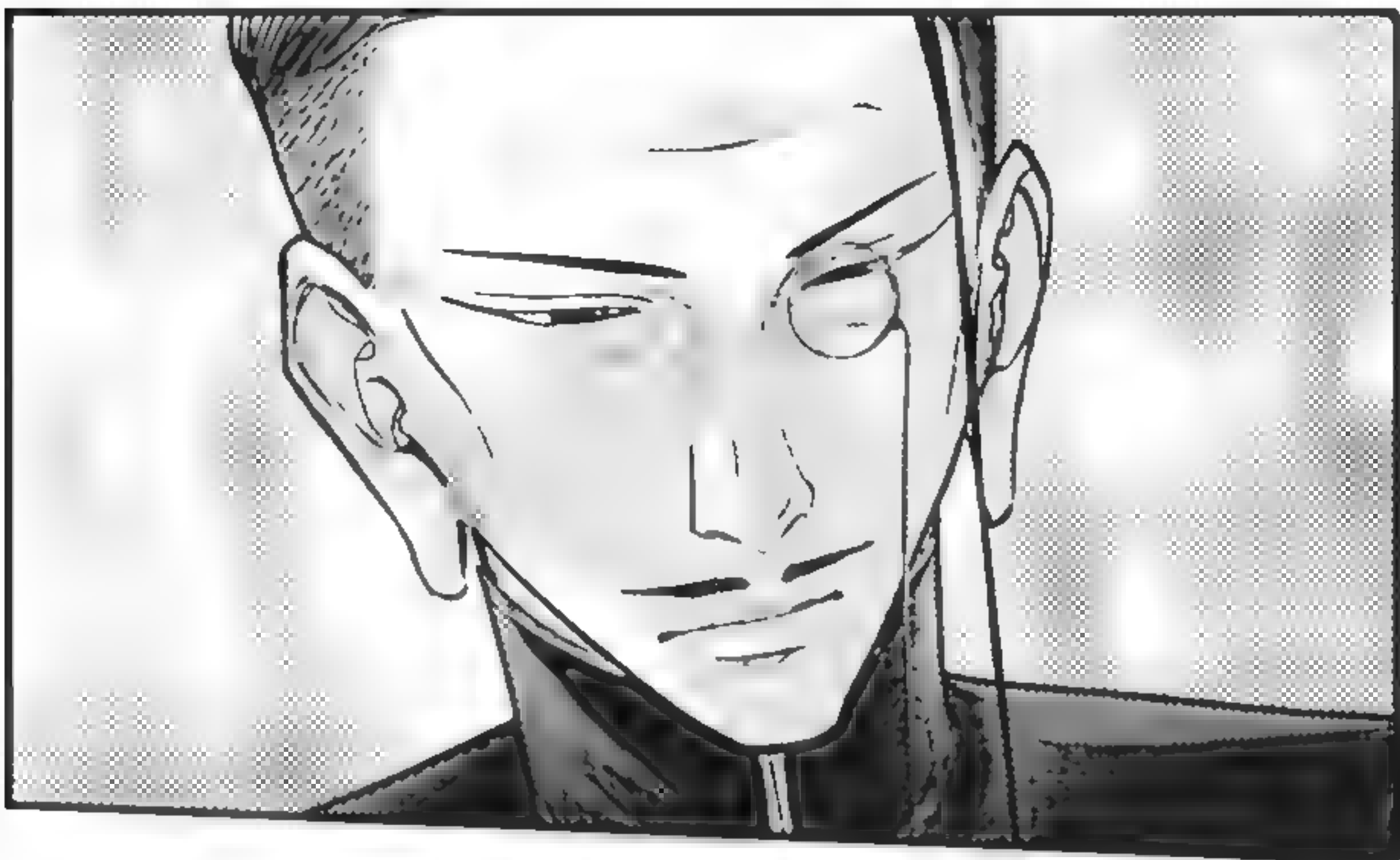








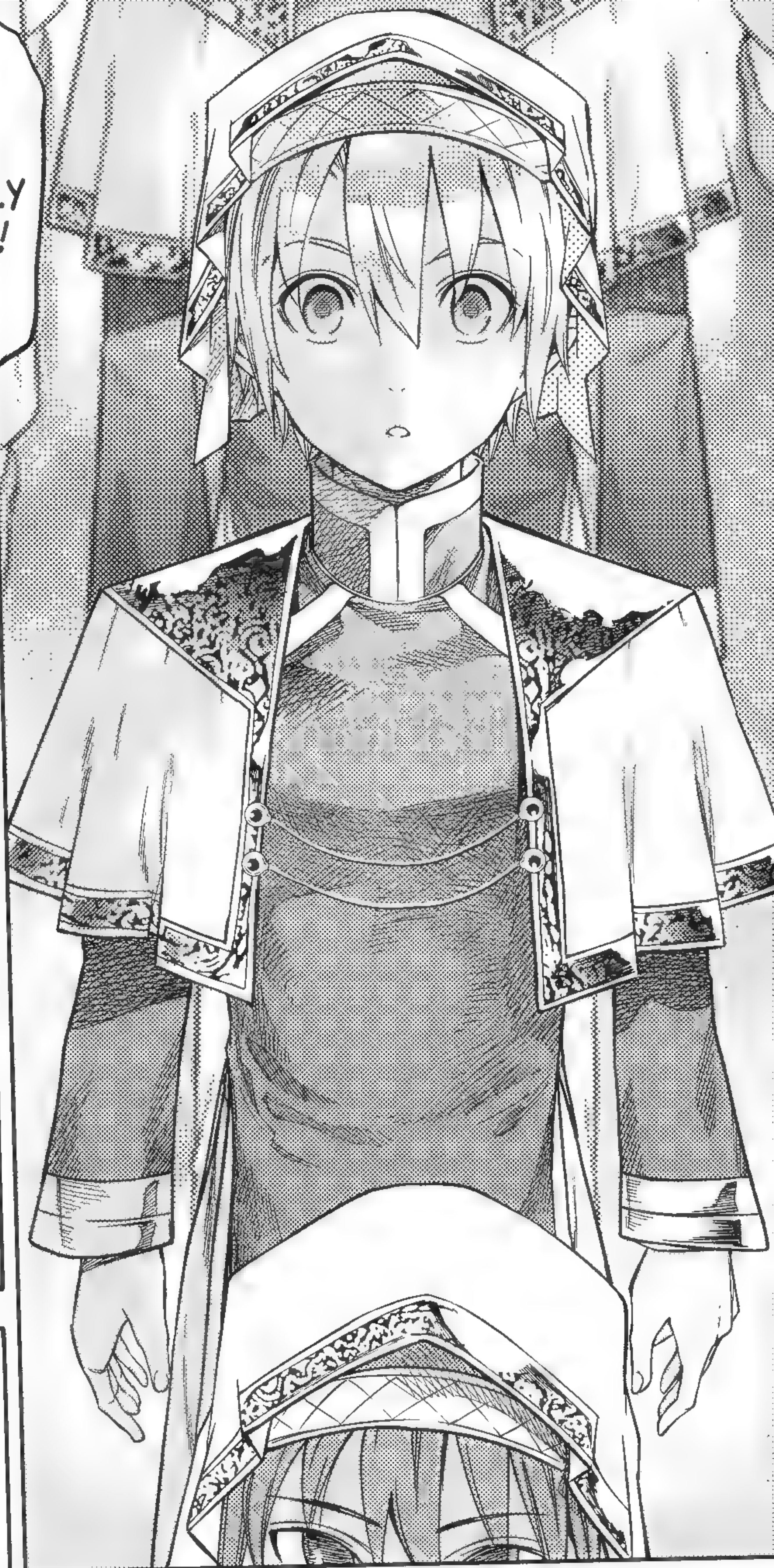






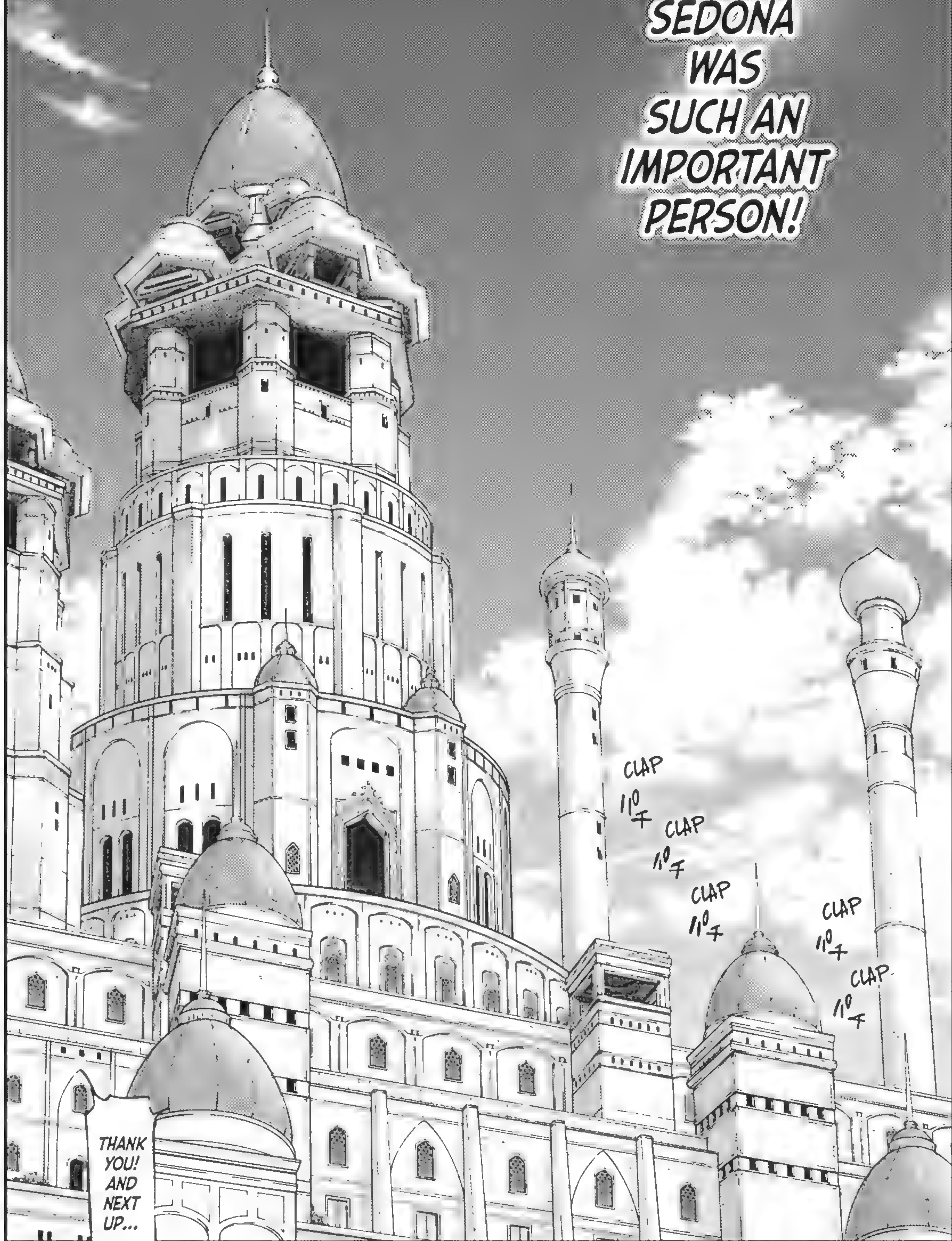








I HAD  
NO IDEA  
SEDONA  
WAS  
SUCH AN  
IMPORTANT  
PERSON!



THANK  
YOU!  
AND  
NEXT  
UP...

CLAP  
110  
7

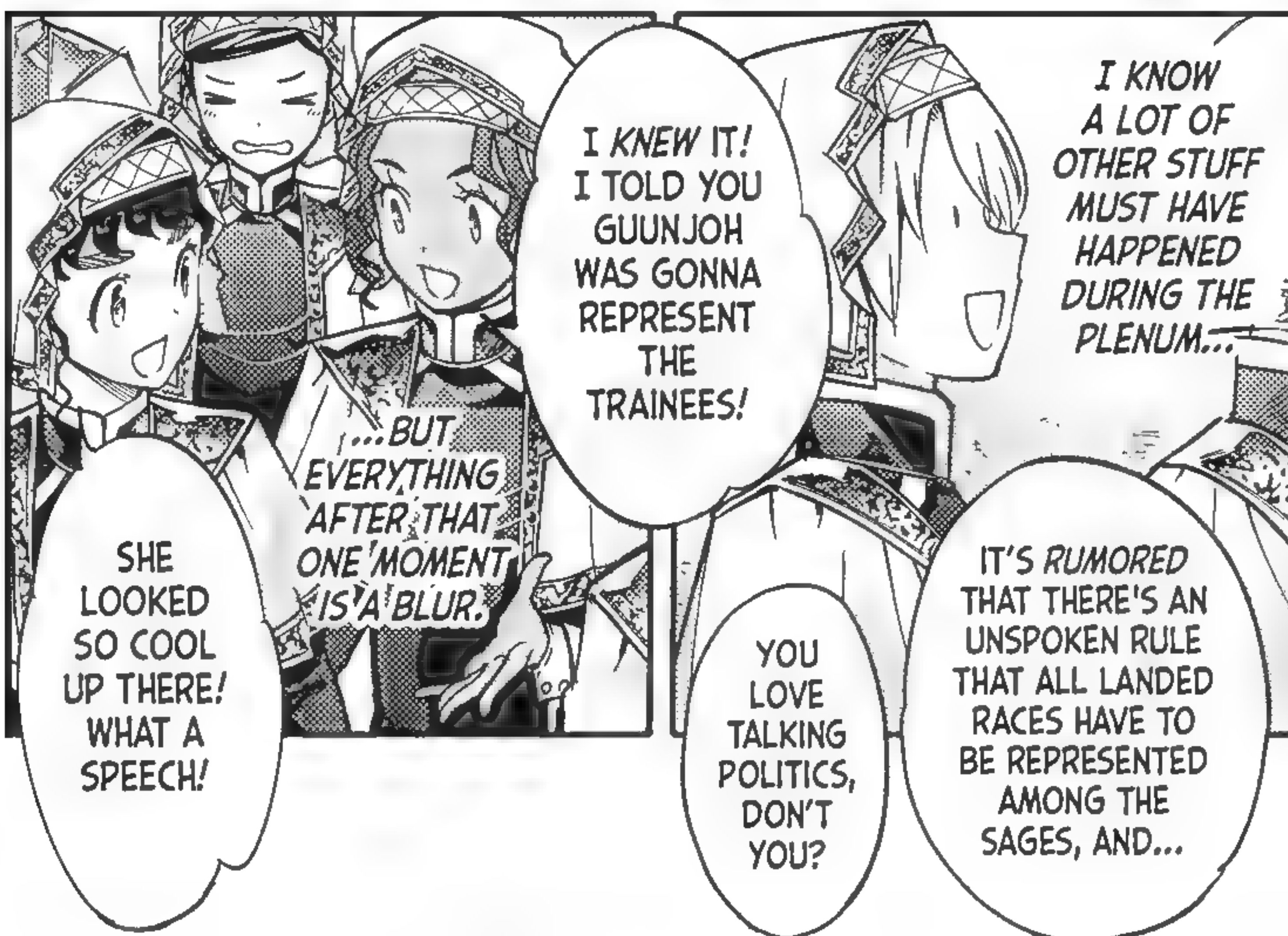
CLAP  
110  
7

CLAP  
110  
7

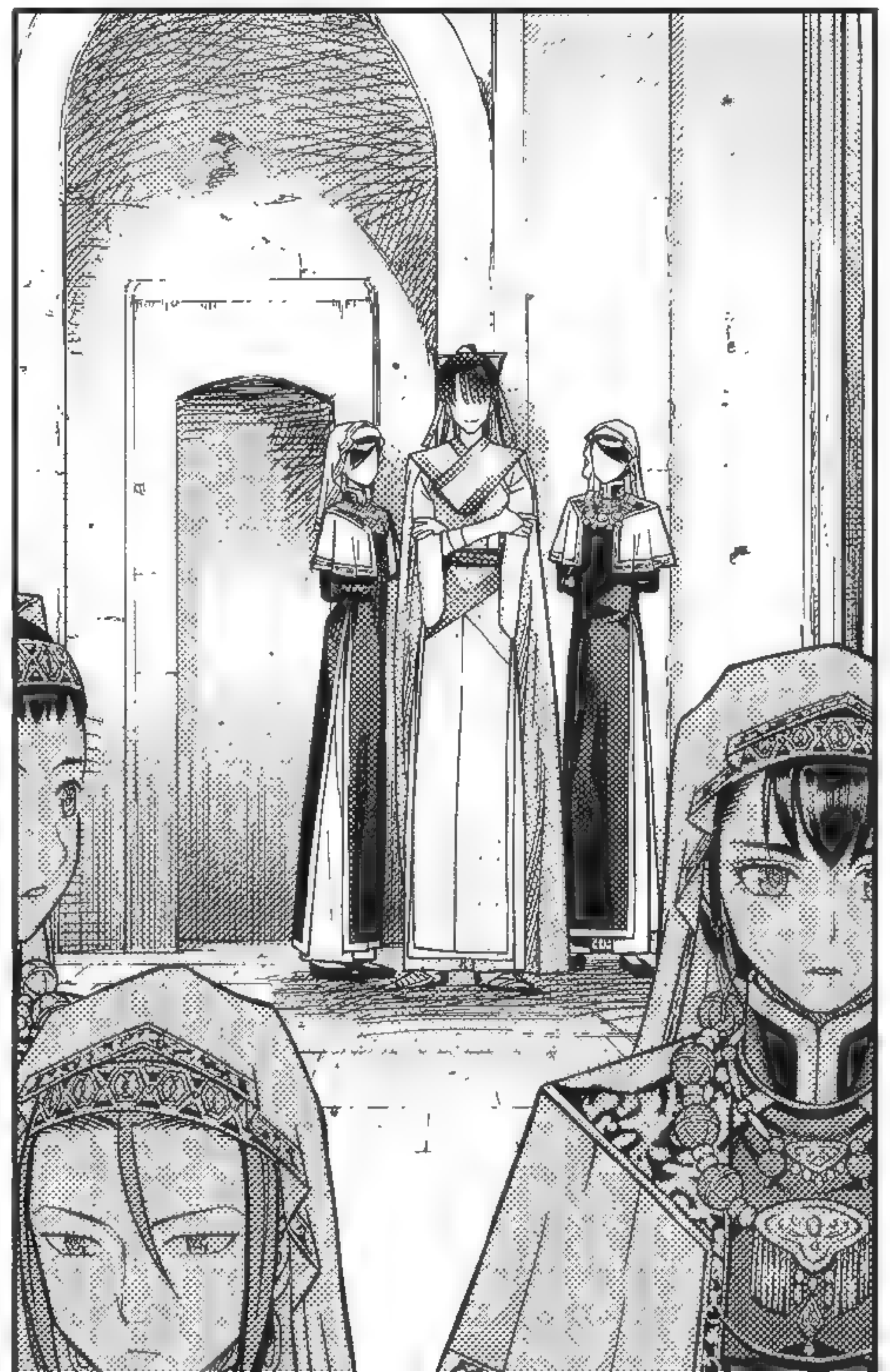
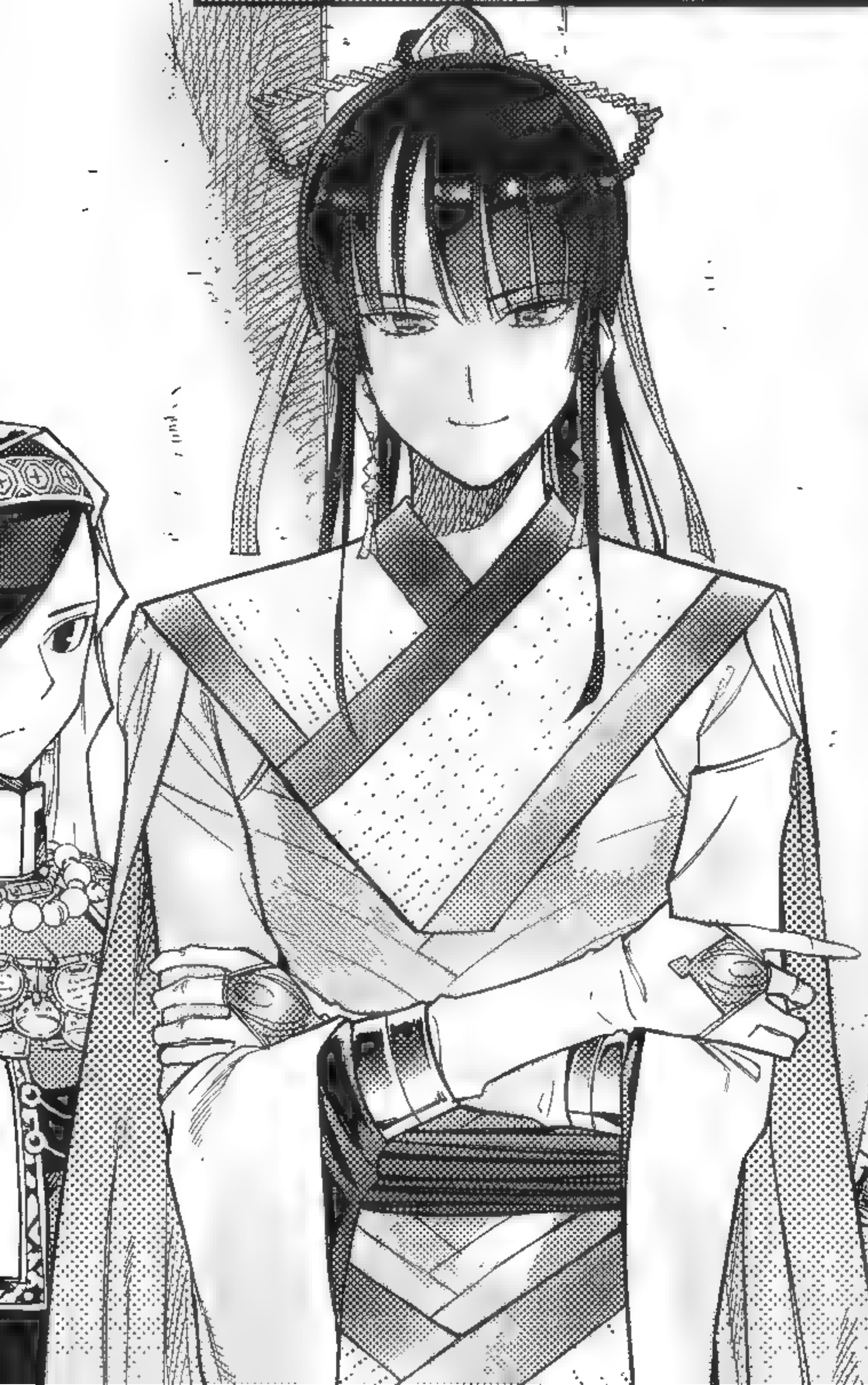
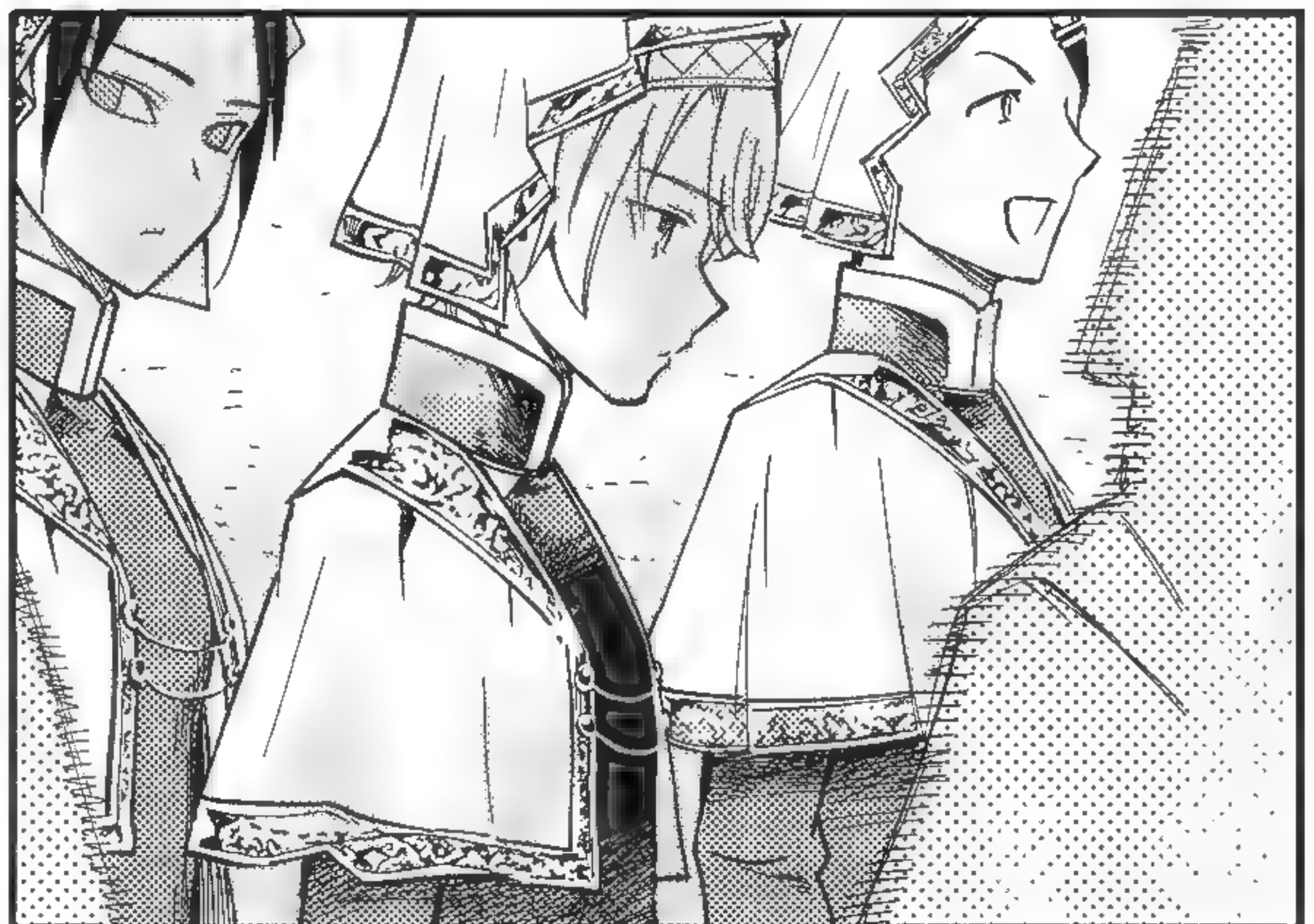
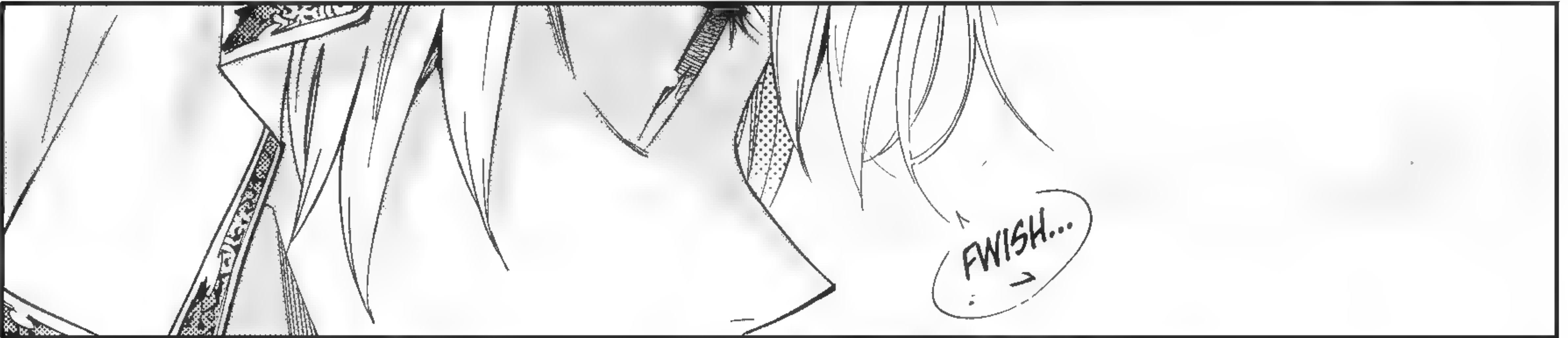
CLAP  
110  
7

CLAP  
110  
7

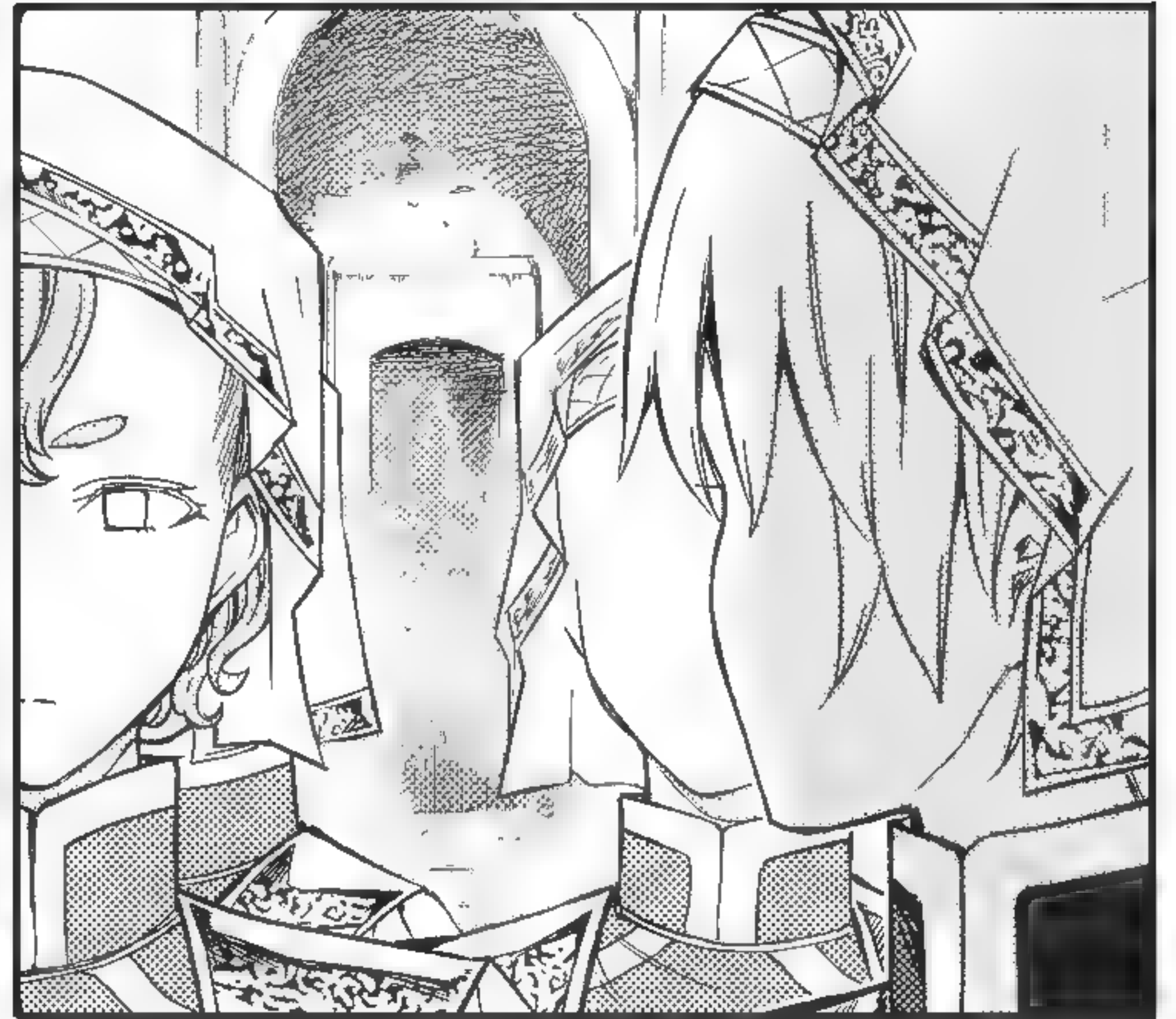
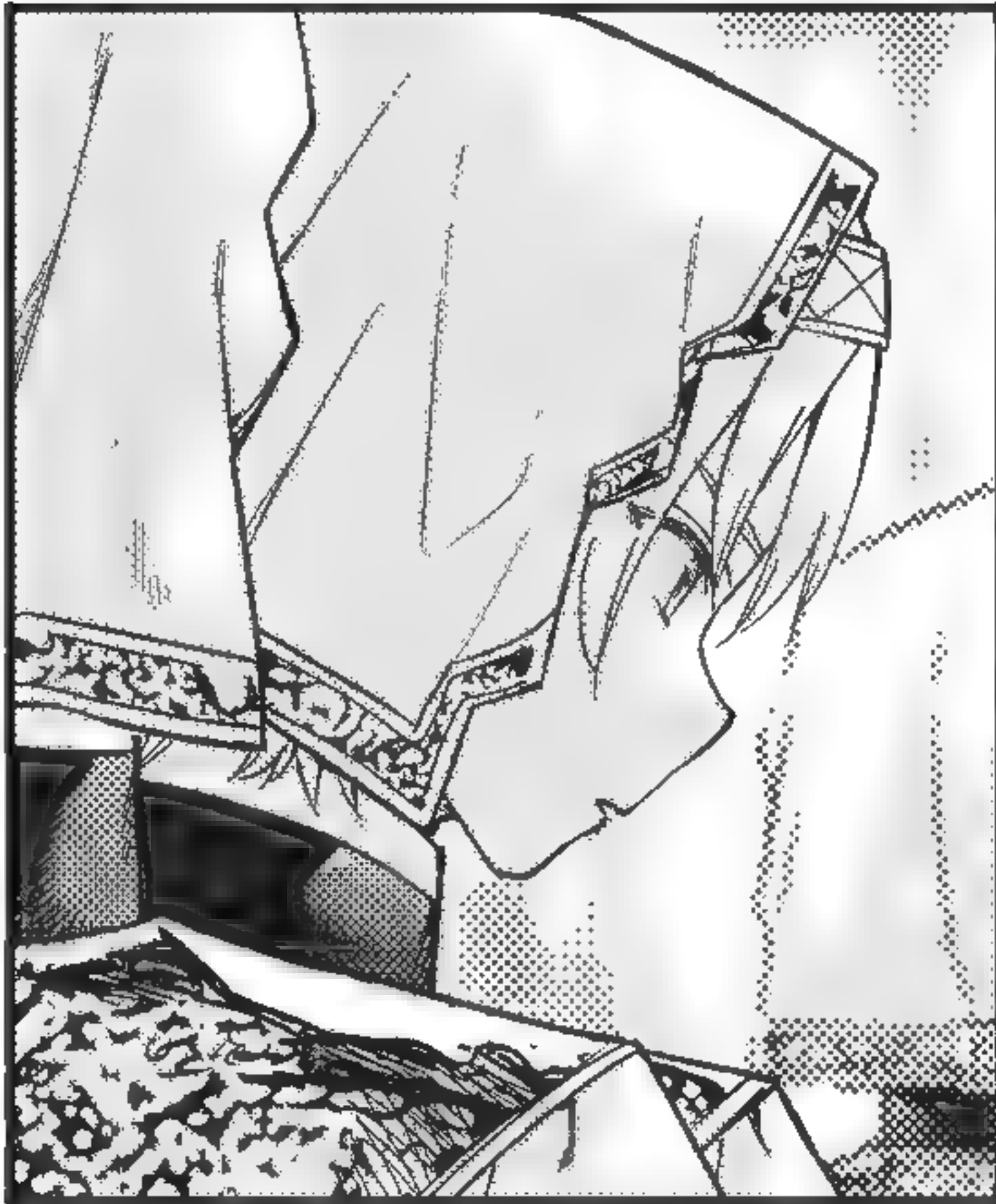
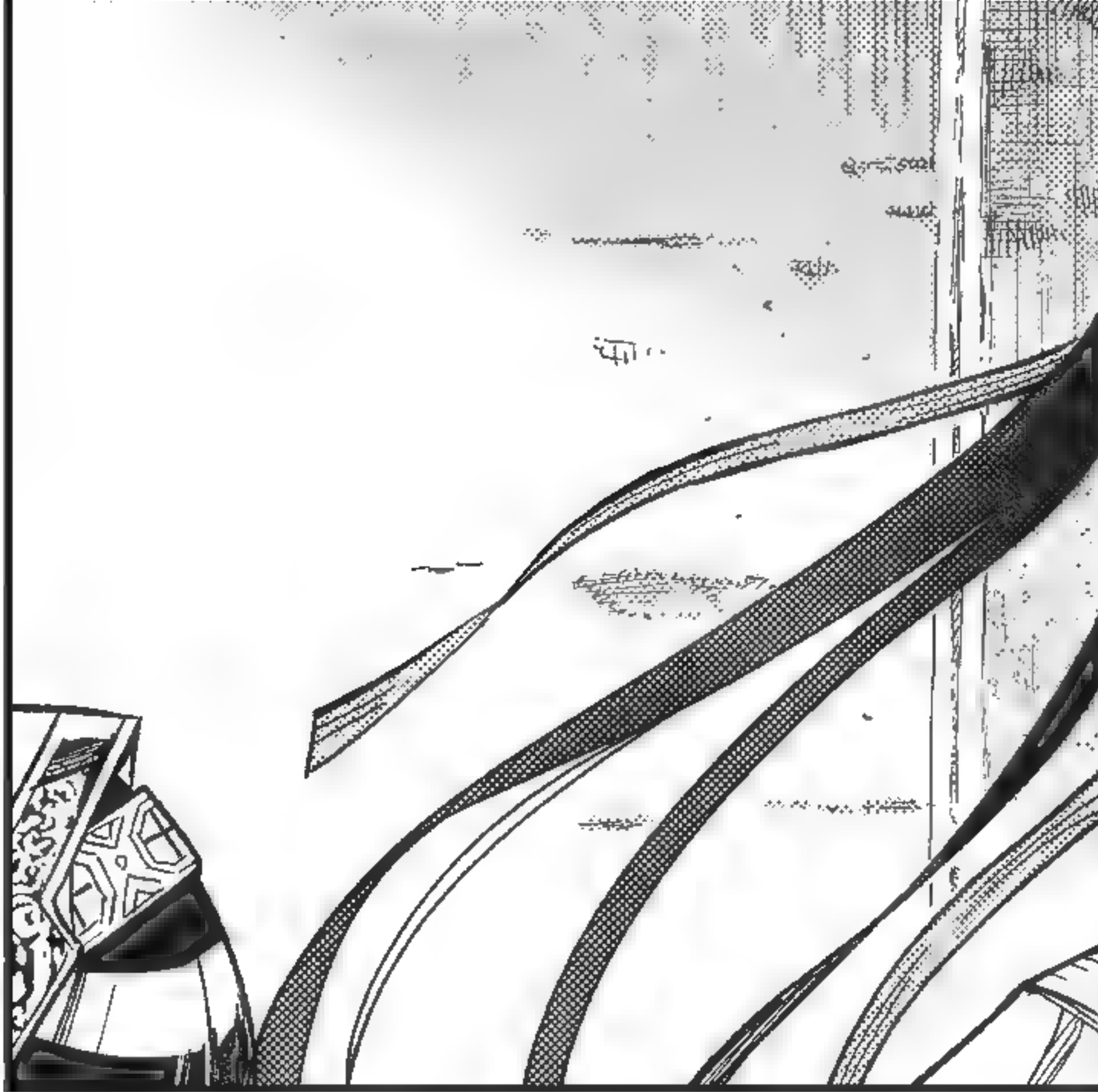














WOULD THE  
KIND OF  
PERSON WHO  
BECOMES A  
STEWARD...

WHY DID  
SEDONÁ  
LEND IT  
TO ME?

I NEED TO  
KNOW IF I  
OWN THE  
ONLY COPY  
OF THAT  
BOOK!

...EVEN  
REMEMBER A  
LITTLE BOY  
LIKE ME FROM  
A VILLAGE FAR  
AWAY...?

THERE'S  
NO ONE  
HERE.

BUT THIS  
SURE  
DOESN'T  
LOOK LIKE  
AN EXIT  
TO THE  
OUTSIDE...

TMP

WHY THE  
DOWNCAST  
EYES?

MAYBE  
THAT  
BREEZE...

...WAS  
JUST MY  
IMAGINATION.



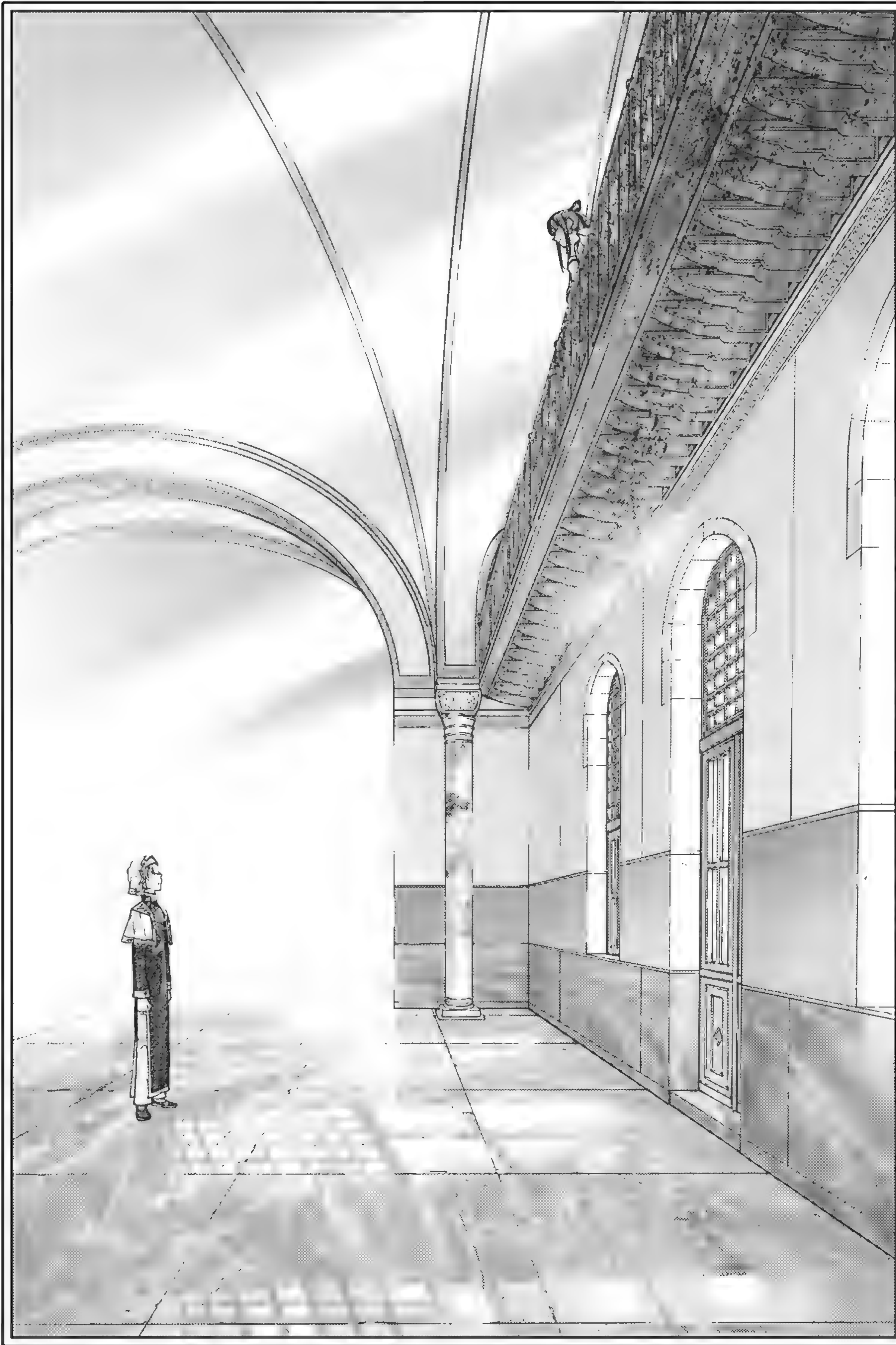


GREETINGS,  
THEO FUMIS.

I WAS  
BEGINNING TO  
WONDER IF  
YOU'D EVER  
ARRIVE.











**Cynthea Loh Tei**

The 27th trainee of this incoming class. A girl yet to be revealed for reasons that will eventually become clear.

**Patee Catl**

Daughter of the esteemed House Catl. Calm and gentle in nature, but bafflingly uninformed about the world in general. Often oblivious to matters outside the purview of the kafna exam—even things others might deem common sense.

**Tsitzy Mimeh**

A girl with a morbid fear of social interaction. Didn't take to cooking, laundry, or sewing, but has always loved to write. The strokes of her pen are blindingly swift, and the letterforms left behind are so immaculate and uniform, one might assume they came from type on a press bed.

**Sala Sei Sohn**

A Kadoe girl who is fascinated with magi to an almost worrying extent. Quite curious about the relationship between mana and people, and is often seen conducting her own individual investigations on the subject. Tends to talk nonstop when she gets excited, a quality for which she was endlessly scolded by her parents.





### Rei Ana Edan

A 32-year-old Kadoe. Has two children of mixed heritage with her Hyron husband. Enjoys baking sweets in her free time.

### Bustas d'Kayser

A 25-year-old Creyak who is in love with falling in love. Quickly develops crushes on kohkwa, but is slow to act, instead analyzing the potential relationship to pieces, after which she determines there's no common ground to be had and moves on to the next crush. Skilled at cooking and handicrafts.

### Chise Redd

A 43-year-old Rakta woman and the deputy head supervisor for the current class of trainees. An expert swordfighter as well as a kafna, and qualified as an instructor at the swordfighting academy run by her family. Immensely strict with herself; with others, strict but fair.

### Puputo Raputabbis

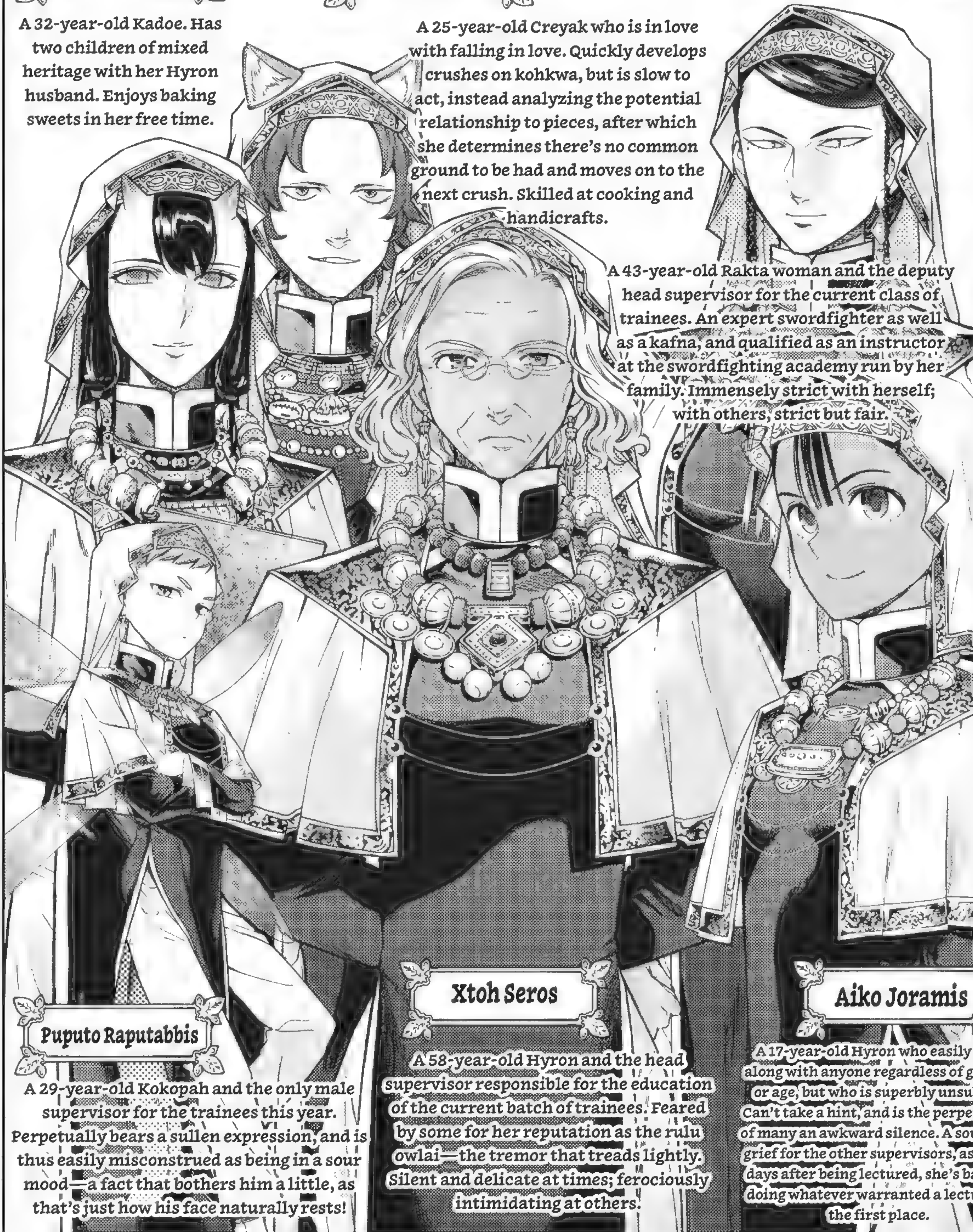
A 29-year-old Kokopah and the only male supervisor for the trainees this year. Perpetually bears a sullen expression, and is thus easily misconstrued as being in a sour mood—a fact that bothers him a little, as that's just how his face naturally rests!

### Xtoh Seros

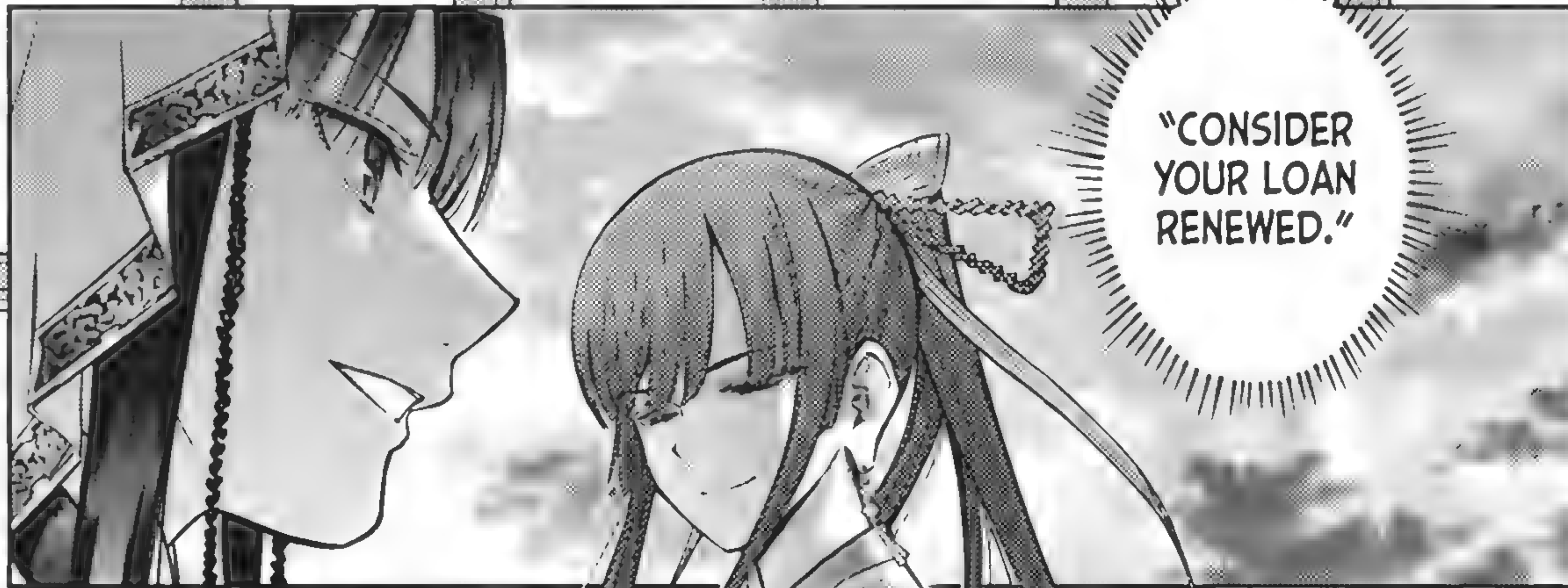
A 58-year-old Hyron and the head supervisor responsible for the education of the current batch of trainees. Feared by some for her reputation as the *rulu owlai*—the tremor that treads lightly. Silent and delicate at times; ferociously intimidating at others.

### Aiko Joramis

A 17-year-old Hyron who easily gets along with anyone regardless of gender or age, but who is superbly unsubtle. Can't take a hint, and is the perpetrator of many an awkward silence. A source of grief for the other supervisors, as three days after being lectured, she's back to doing whatever warranted a lecture in the first place.







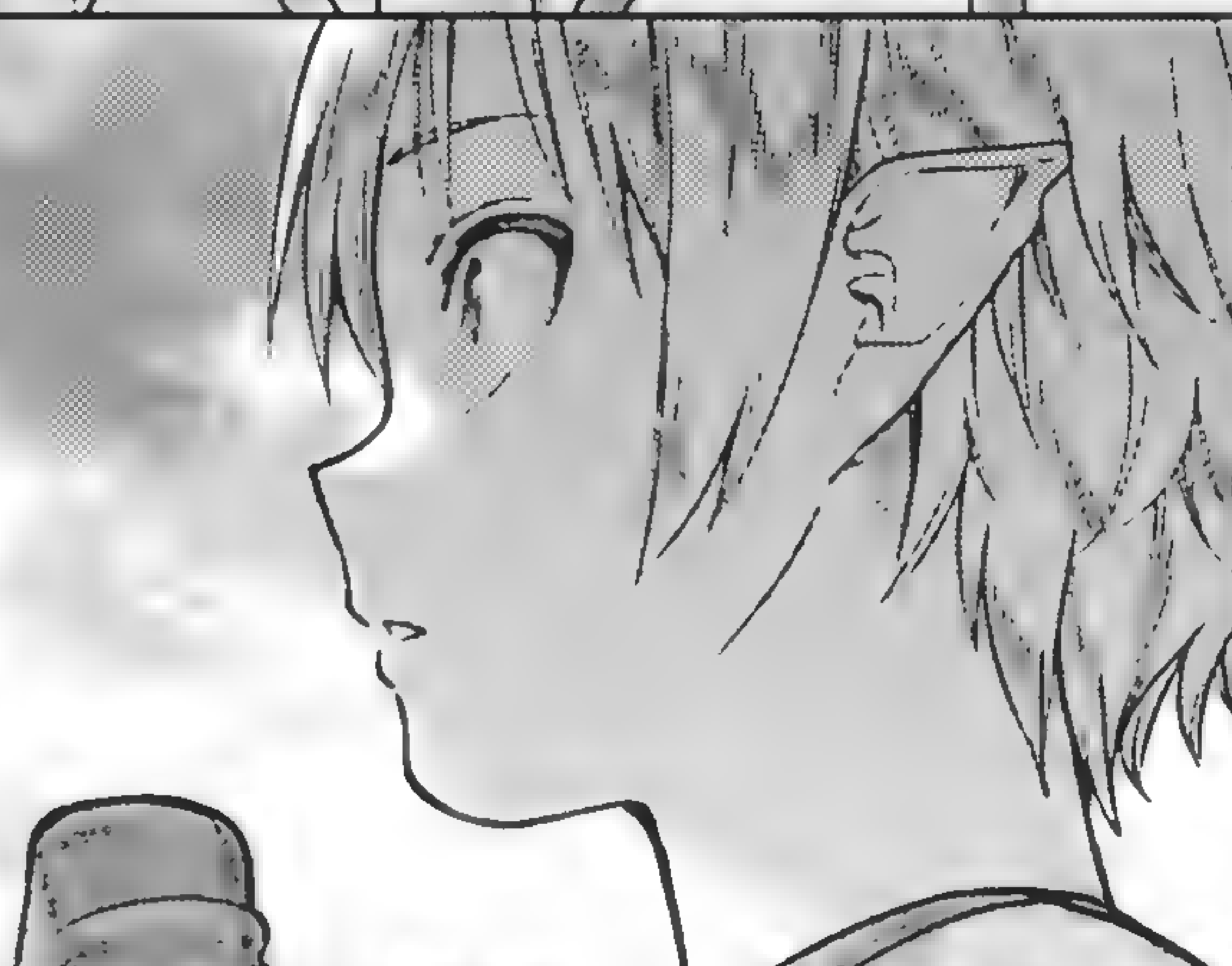
"CONSIDER  
YOUR LOAN  
RENEWED."

19

*Reunion at Aftzaak*

"AS LONG  
AS YOU  
CONTINUE  
TO LOVE  
BOOKS..."

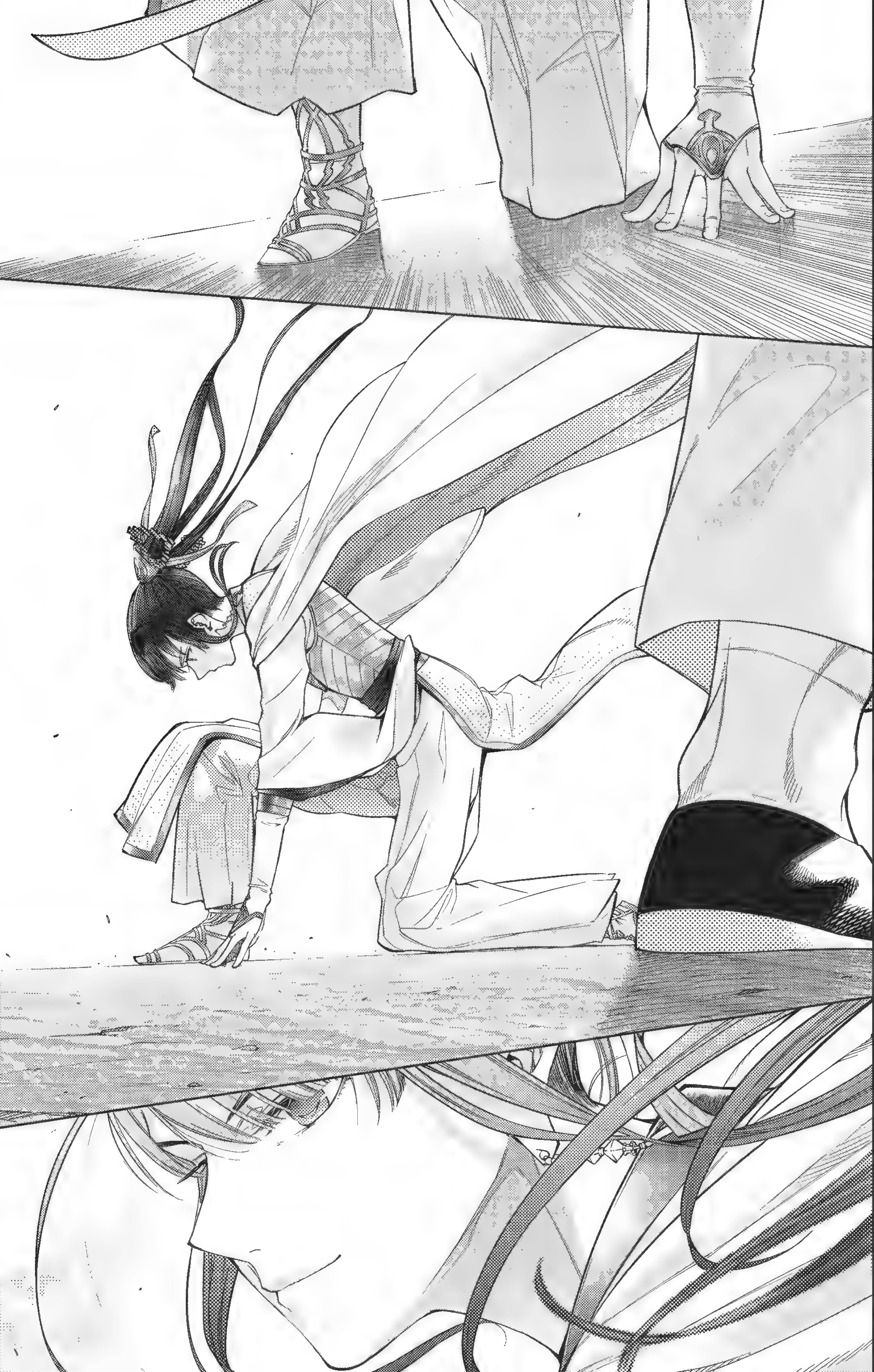
"...I AM  
SURE  
WE'LL  
MEET  
AGAIN."





















TELL ME, SHINJI...

ASSISTANT STEWARDS OF THE PROTECTIONS OFFICE

MISAKI VERTE

SHINJI VERTE

SHALL WE TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE?

TELL ME, HOW FARES YOUR SISTER?

SHE'S WELL! THANK YOU!

YOU KNOW WHAT MASTER SEDONA WOULD SAY?

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

WHY GO TO THE TROUBLE OF LEAPING UP TO THE GALLERY JUST TO JUMP BACK DOWN AGAIN?



YES! CALLING DOWN FROM ON HIGH BEFORE LEAPING TO GROUND LEVEL IS THE WHOLE POINT!

OF COURSE, MASTER SEDONA WOULD LOOK COOL DOING ANYTHING.

HMMM, WHATEVER.

“WHAT KIND OF A FATEFUL REUNION IS IT...”

...IF YOU HAVEN'T GONE TO THE TROUBLE OF MAKING IT COOL?!”

AND SO ON.

UH-HUH. AND THE FACT THAT YOU'RE UP HIGH MAKES IT COOL?





...EVERYTHING  
CHANGED FOR  
ME AFTER  
THAT DAY.

YOU  
KNOW...



...YOU'RE  
THE WHOLE  
REASON I'M  
STANDING  
HERE NOW!


YOU AND  
THE OTHER  
KAFNA...



...I DON'T  
THINK I  
COULD EVER  
THANK YOU  
ENOUGH!

I...






I MAY HAVE GIVEN YOU A GENTLE PUSH FROM BEHIND, BUT I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION LEADING YOU HERE BY THE HAND.

MY ACTIONS WERE HARDLY OF NOTE.

YOU GOT HERE ON YOUR OWN, ON YOUR OWN STRENGTH.



...AND THAT OF THE PEOPLE YOU'VE RALLIED AROUND YOU IN LIFE.



...AND YOUR SISTERS'...

YOURS...



OH! BEFORE I FORGET!

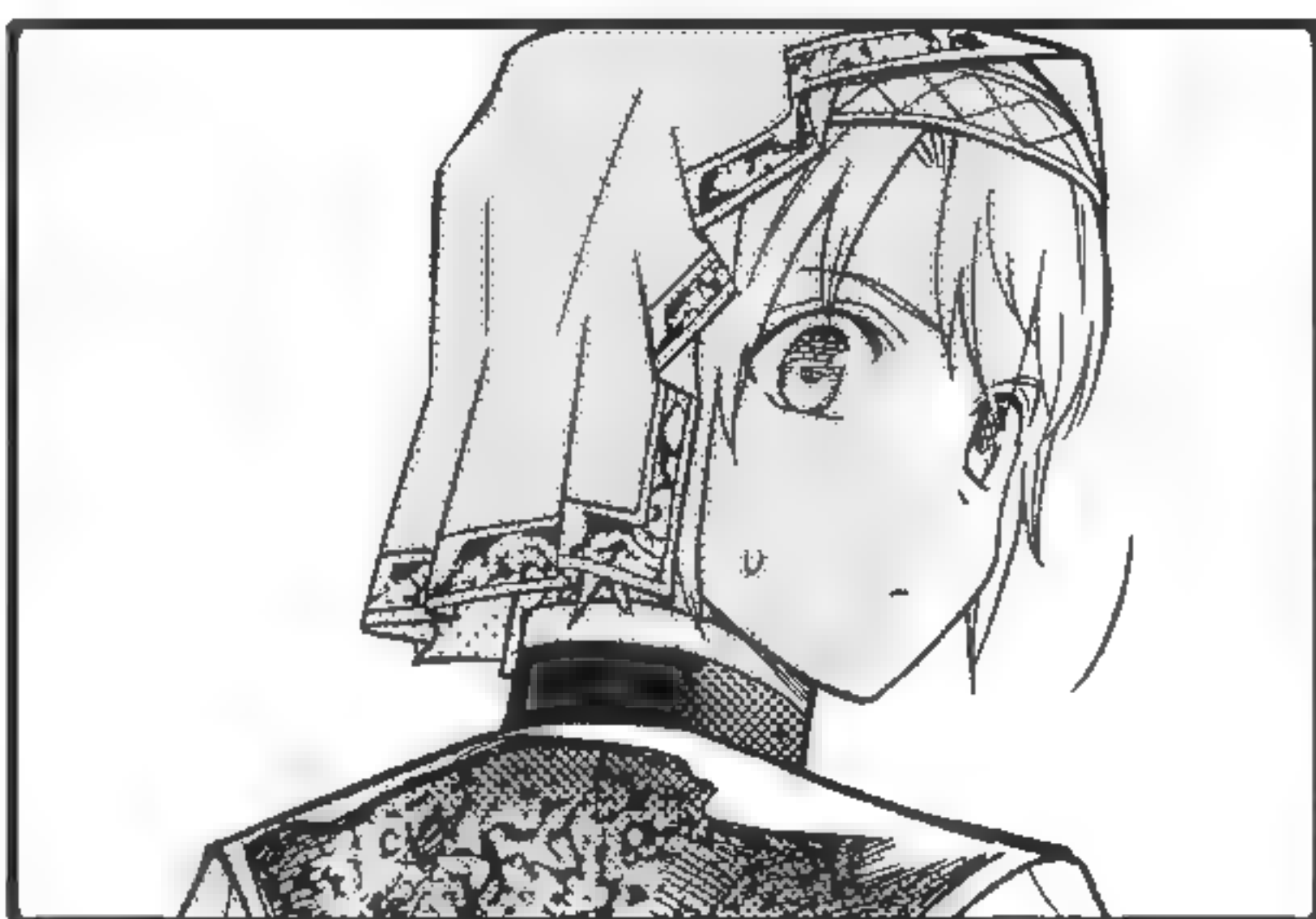
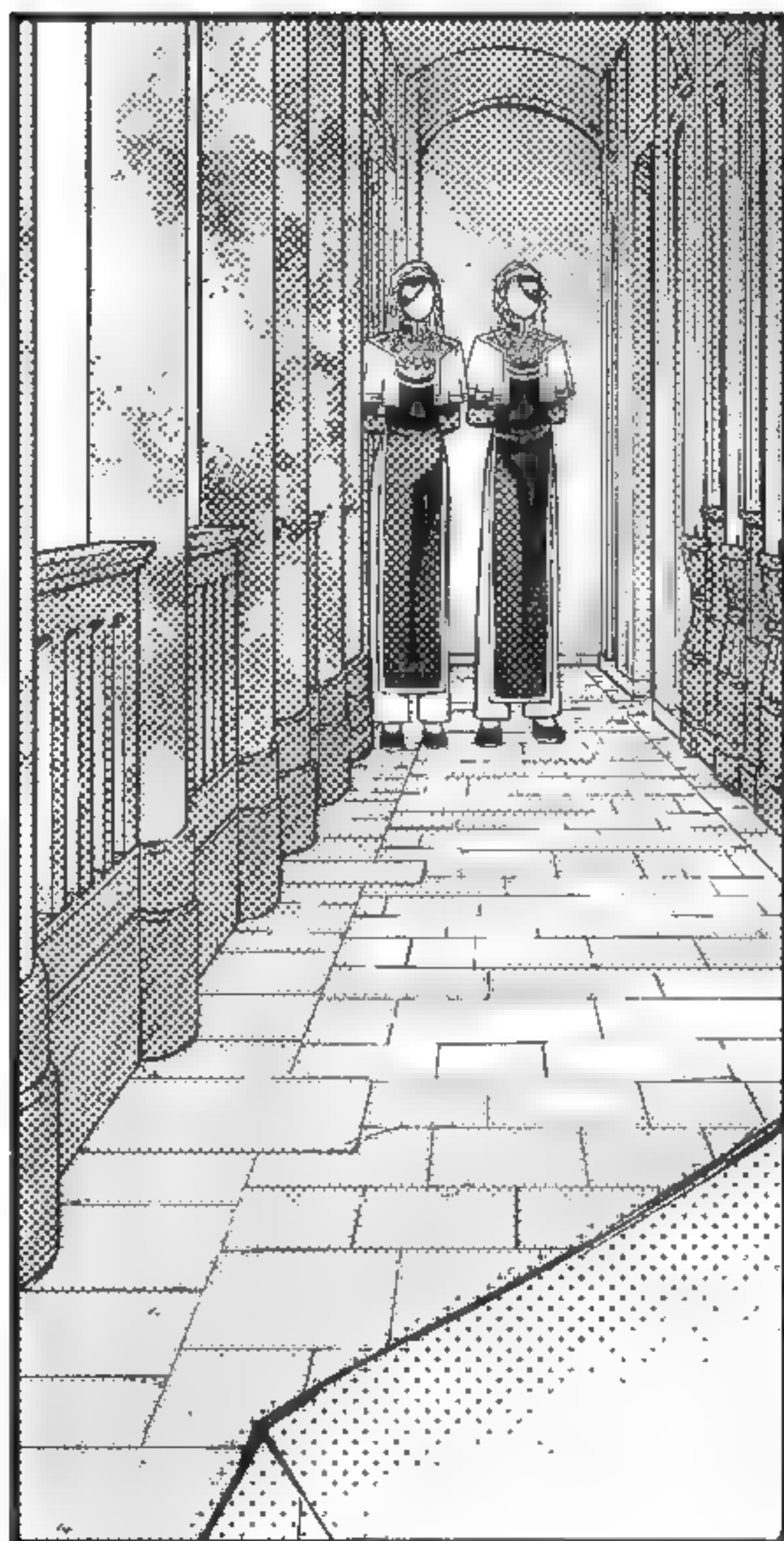




THE BOOK  
YOU LENT  
ME! I  
BROUGHT IT  
WITH ME!

IT'S BACK  
IN MY DORM  
ROOM. I'LL  
BRING IT BY  
TOMORROW...

...SO  
IF YOU  
COULD  
JUST LET  
ME KNOW  
WHERE  
TO...



TELL ME,  
WHAT  
DID YOU  
THINK OF  
IT?

HOW DID  
IT MAKE  
YOU  
FEEL?



THERE  
WASN'T  
ANY-  
ONE...

...I MEAN...  
NOT EVEN MY  
SISTER... I  
COULDN'T TALK  
WITH ANYBODY  
ABOUT THE  
THINGS I READ  
INSIDE...

IT'S...  
A LOT  
TO  
TAKE  
IN.

TOO  
MUCH,  
REALLY  
...

WHY DID  
YOU GIVE IT  
TO ME? HOW  
COULD YOU  
LEAVE...

...A  
BOOK  
LIKE  
THAT...

...IN MY  
HANDS? I  
WAS YOUNG  
AND POOR,  
IN A VILLAGE  
FAR FROM  
ANYTHING.

THAT  
BOOK-

H  
F T  
W S T  
H H T  
H T





THE THINGS  
THAT BOOK  
SAYS ARE  
DANGEROUS!

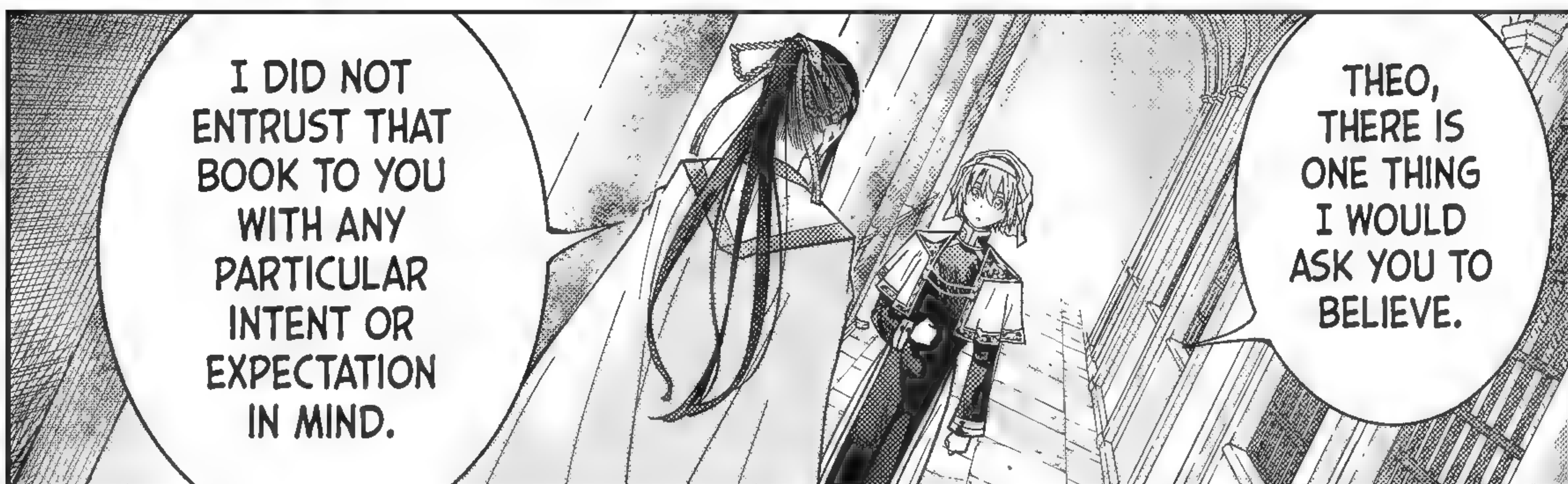
IF IT FELL  
INTO THE  
WRONG  
HANDS...

...THAT BOOK  
COULD RIP  
APART THE  
SOCIETY  
EVERYONE  
WORKED SO  
DESPERATELY  
TO BUILD!













...IT'S  
NOT LIKE  
I BECAME  
A KAFNA  
WITH SOME  
GRANDIOSE  
DREAMS OR  
ANYTHING!

ERM!

NO!  
I,  
UH...

I...

YOU WERE  
ABLE TO  
UNDERSTAND  
ITS WORDS  
FOR WHAT  
THEY ARE.

AND YOU  
CHOSE TO  
WALK THE  
KAFNA  
PATH.

I CANNOT  
EXPRESS  
WHAT GREAT  
DELIGHT  
THAT BRINGS  
ME.

I  
JUST  
...

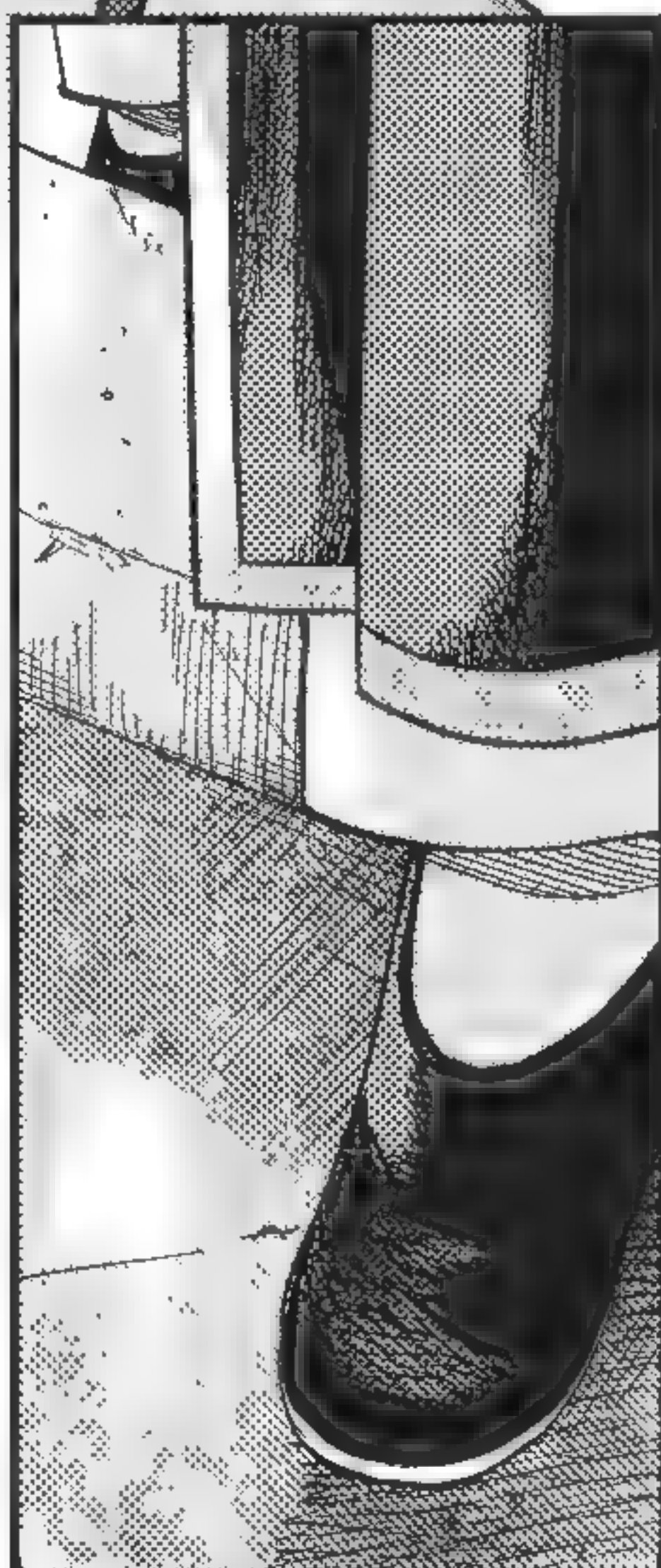
DID IT  
'CAUSE  
I LIKE  
BOOKS,  
AND...

...AND  
BECAUSE...



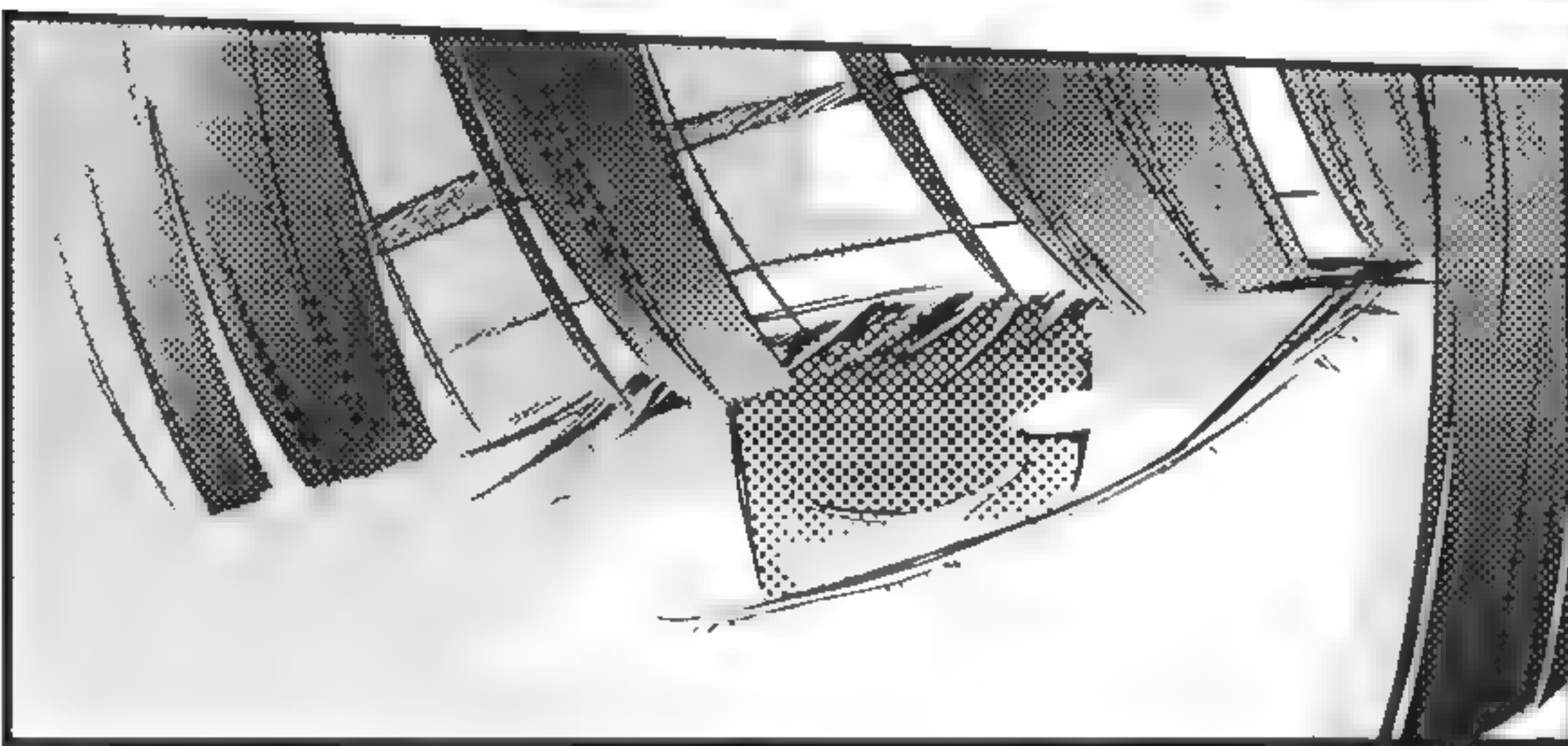
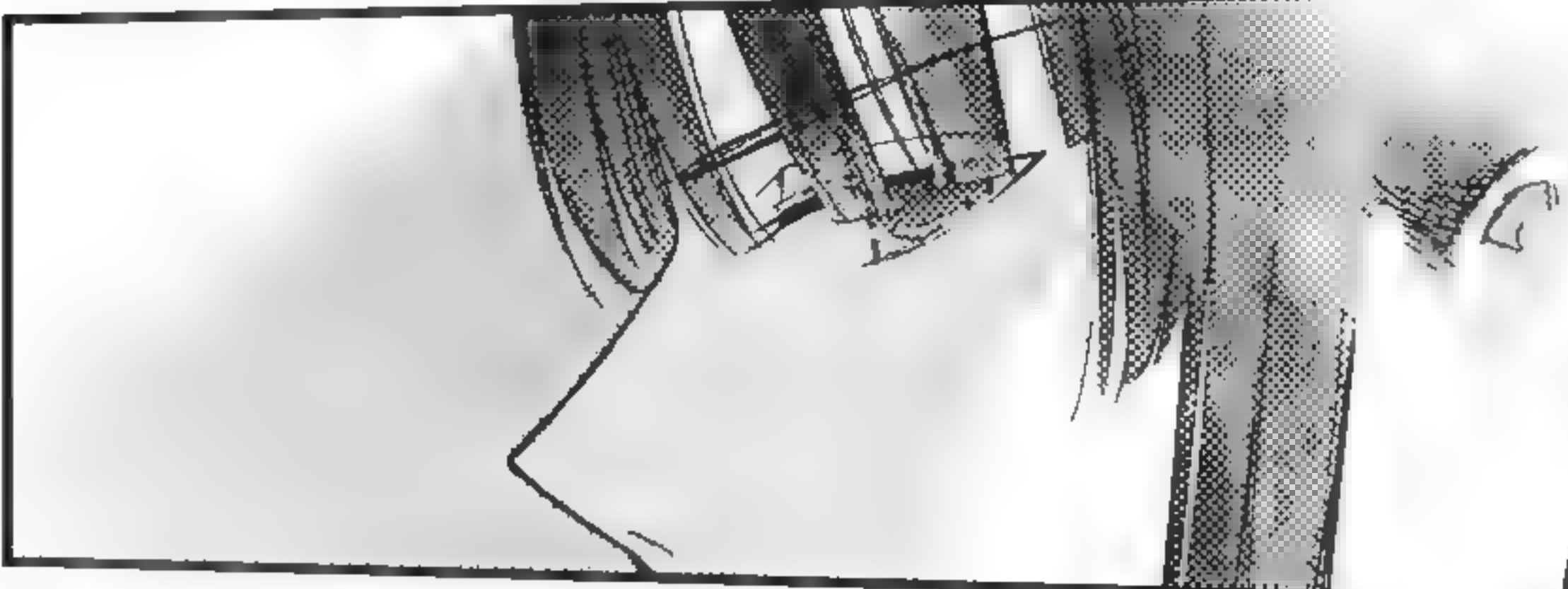
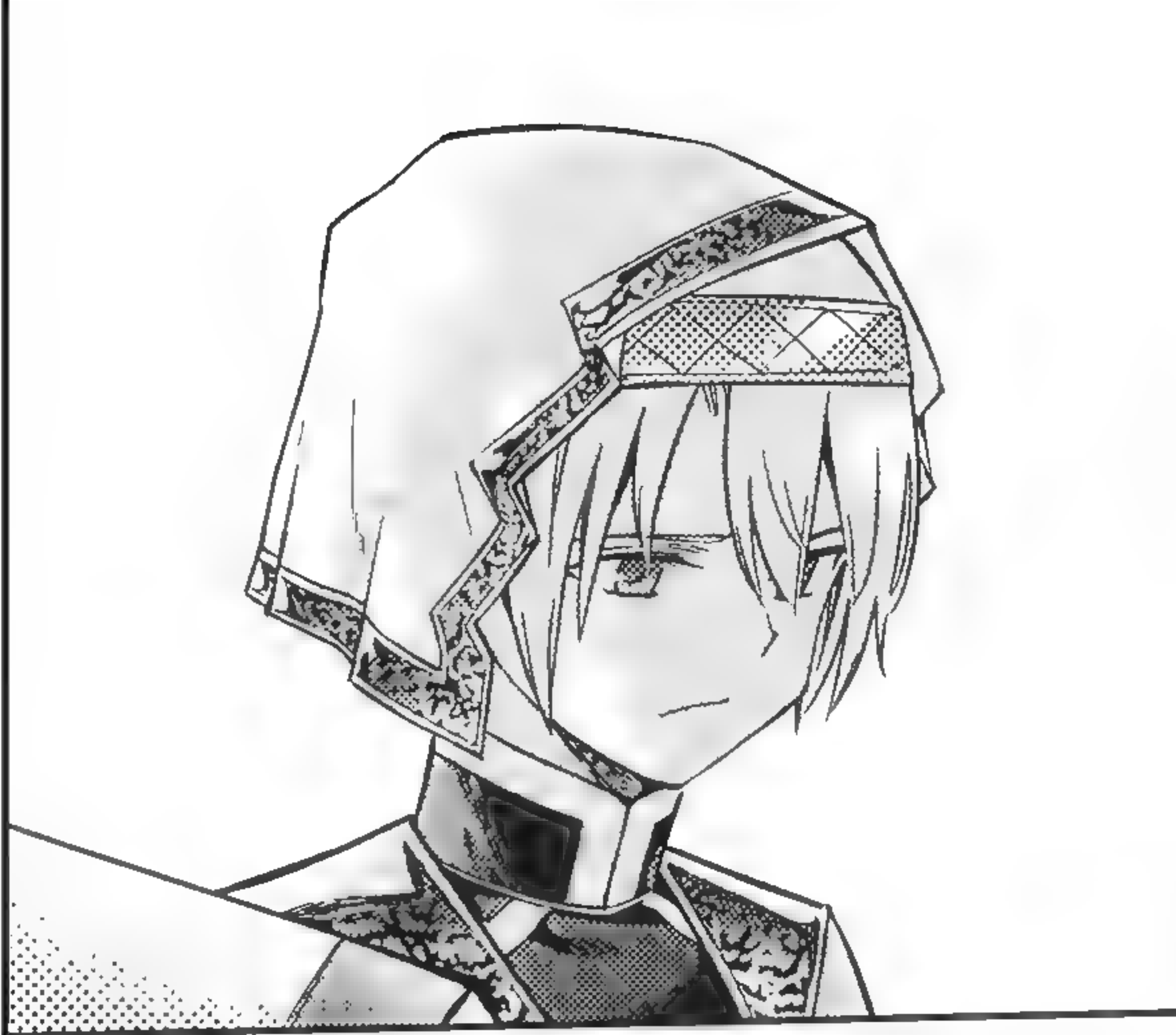
YOUR NEW  
LIFE AS A  
KAFNA, I  
MEAN.

HOW  
IS IT?



...EVERYTHING  
ABOUT YOU  
WAS SO AWE-  
INSPIRING.



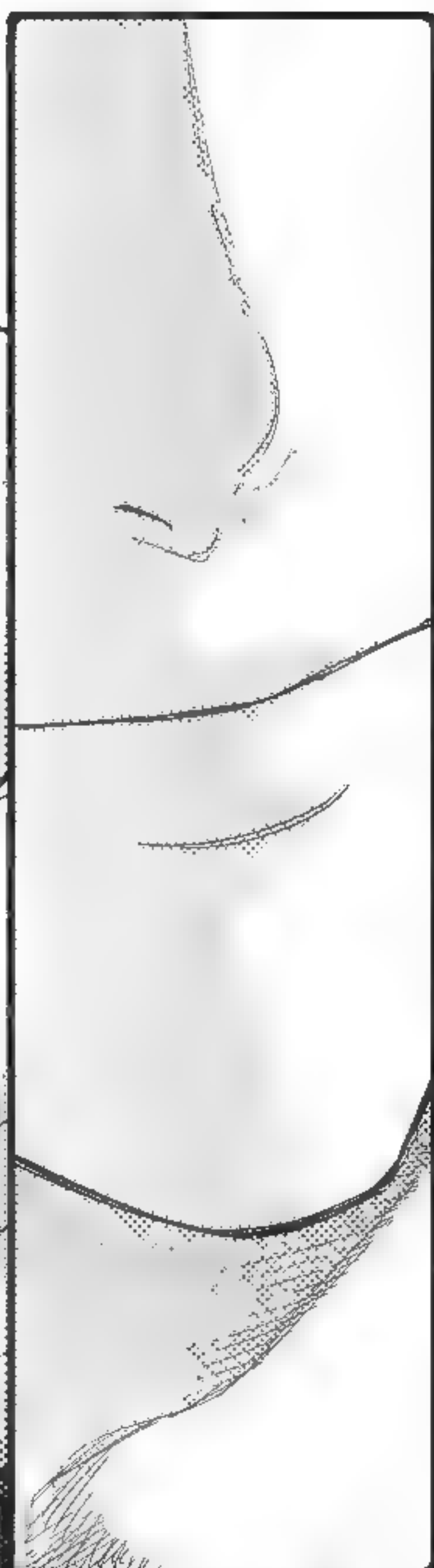






IT SEEMS...

...YOU'VE GROWN WELL BEYOND THE NEED FOR GENTLE PUSHES ON THE BACK.



SQK...



I'M AFRAID I MUST BE GOING, THEO.

IT BRINGS ME MUCH JOY THAT OUR PATHS HAVE CROSSED AGAIN.



I AM SURE THAT IT IS THE TREMBLING...

...OF A WARRIOR AS HE GOES TO BATTLE!





HUH?!



KEEP  
IT.



WAIT!

THE  
BOOK!  
HOW  
SHOULD  
I GET IT  
BACK TO  
Y-



WHAT DO YOU  
PICTURE WHEN  
YOU HEAR THE  
WORD "FATE"?



TELL ME,  
THEO.




DO YOU IMAGINE  
IT AS A WARRIOR  
BEING ORDERED  
TO VANQUISH A  
DARK LORD WITH  
A SWORD THAT  
ONLY HE CAN  
REMOVE FROM  
THE STONE?

OR  
PERHAPS AS  
A BEAUTIFUL  
MAIDEN THAT  
FALLS FROM  
THE SKY AND  
PROVES TO BE  
YOUR TRUE  
LOVE?

DO YOU  
IMAGINE A  
FORCE THAT  
TRANSCENDS  
HUMAN  
COMPREHEN-  
SION?

DO YOU  
IMAGINE A  
DESTINY WE  
EACH CARRY  
FROM BIRTH?






SURELY IT  
IS FAR TOO  
MUNDANE AN  
OCCURRENCE  
FOR A  
GRANDIOSE  
LABEL LIKE  
"FATE," YES?

...COULD  
PERHAPS BE  
WAVED AWAY AS  
HAPPENSTANCE, A  
FEW FICKLE WHIMS  
COMPOUNDED BY  
A MOMENT OF  
FORGETFULNESS.

THE  
MANNER IN  
WHICH THAT  
BOOK CAME  
TO YOU...



BUT HERE  
IS WHAT I  
PERCEIVE.

THE  
ENCOUNTERS  
THAT MIGHT  
CHANGE OUR  
LIVES ARE IN  
FACT NEVER  
FAR FROM  
HAND.

ALL  
FLAVORED  
WITH THE  
PINCH OF  
COURAGE YOU  
MUSTERED  
TODAY.

...AND AN  
UNFORESEEN  
MISTAKE.

...A  
SINGLE  
KIND  
GESTURE...

I SEE A  
DASH OF  
CAPRICE,  
MIXED  
WITH...




AND I AM  
CERTAIN NOW  
MORE THAN  
EVER—



...I TAKE  
GREAT PRIDE  
IN THAT  
APPROACH  
TO LIFE.

IN  
FACT...



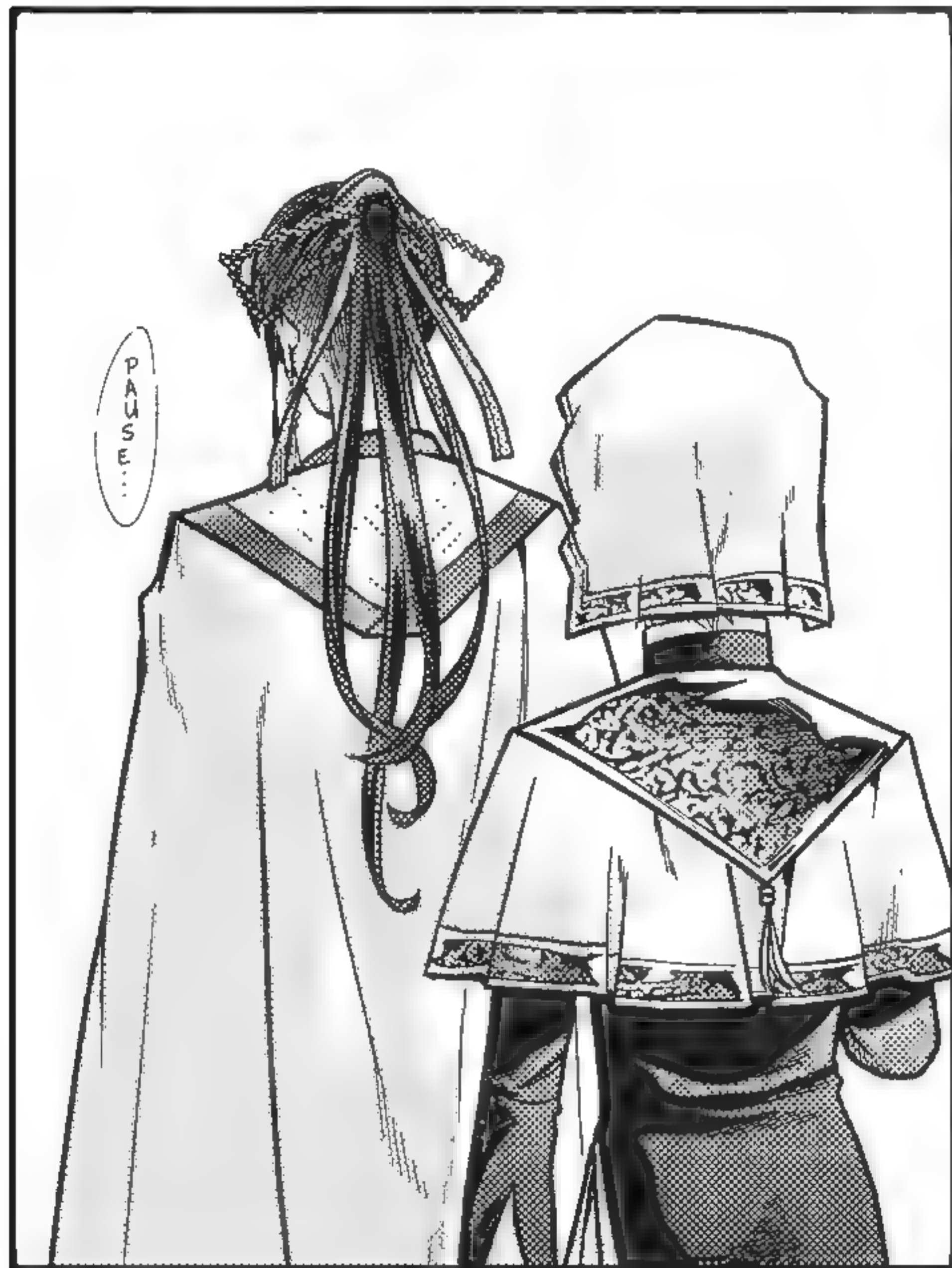
THAT IS WHY  
I CHOOSE TO  
SAVOR THE  
TINIEST EVENTS  
OF MY MOST  
ORDINARY  
DAYS.





IT WAS  
FATE THAT  
LET CROSS  
OUR PATHS!









A PART  
OF ME  
HOPEd...

...WOULD  
INCLUDE  
WORDS  
TO THAT  
EFFECT.

THE  
PROTECTIONS  
OFFICE, THEO.  
WE'LL BE  
WAITING FOR  
YOU.

...THAT THIS  
REUNION...

THEY WOULD  
NEVER TAKE  
FROM ME...

BUT I  
SHOULD  
KNOW  
BETTER.

...THE BURDEN,  
THE PAIN, THE  
JOY OF MAKING  
THAT DECISION  
FOR MYSELF.

OF COURSE  
SEDONA  
WOULDN'T SAY  
ANYTHING  
LIKE THAT.

I MUST CAREFULLY  
TURN EACH ONE.

IN THE BOOK  
THAT IS THE  
STORY OF MY  
LIFE, THE PAGES  
TO COME WILL BE  
THE HEAVIEST.

I AM CERTAIN  
THAT JUST  
BEYOND THE  
ANGUISH...





I EAGERLY  
AWAIT THE  
DAY.

...I WILL  
FIND A  
RELEASE OF  
THE MOST  
SUBLIME  
KIND.



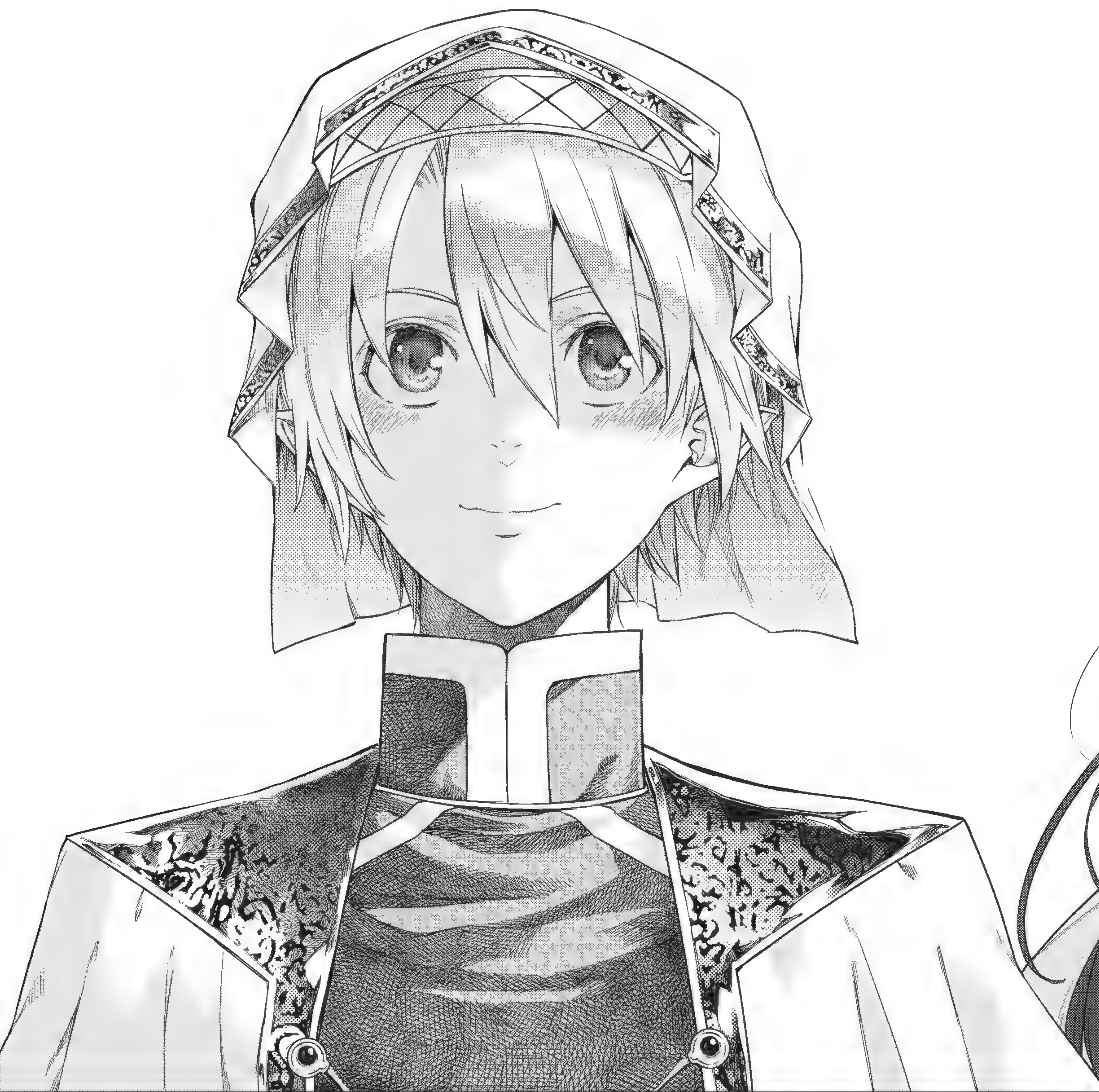
I WILL  
VISIT  
YOU  
AGAIN.

ONCE I  
CAN CALL  
MYSELF  
A TRUE  
KAFNA.









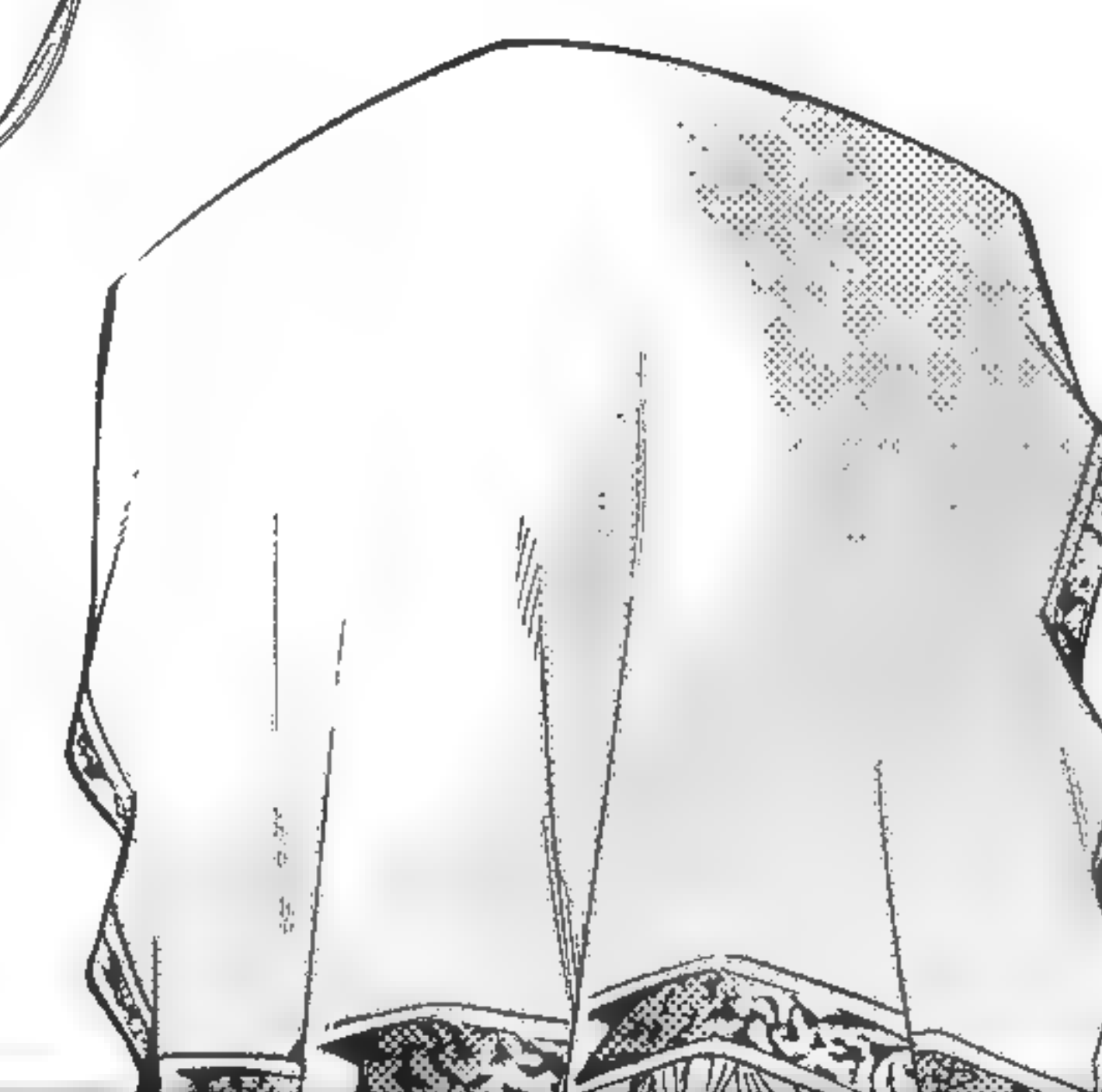
*One of them,  
a champion  
destined to  
protect the  
world...*







*The other,  
a force of  
darkness  
destined  
to tear it  
asunder.*

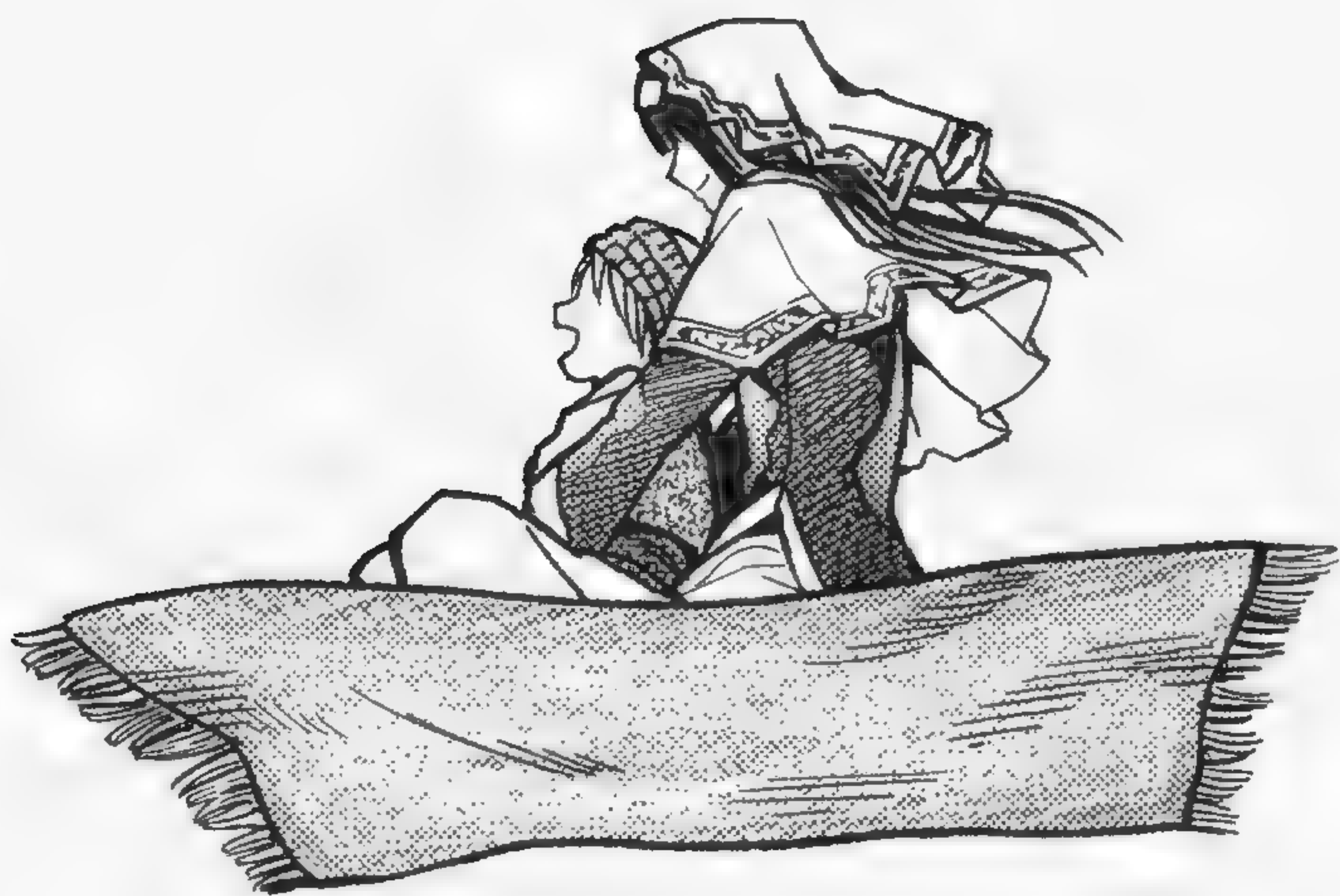




*The reunion  
long promised  
had finally  
arrived.*



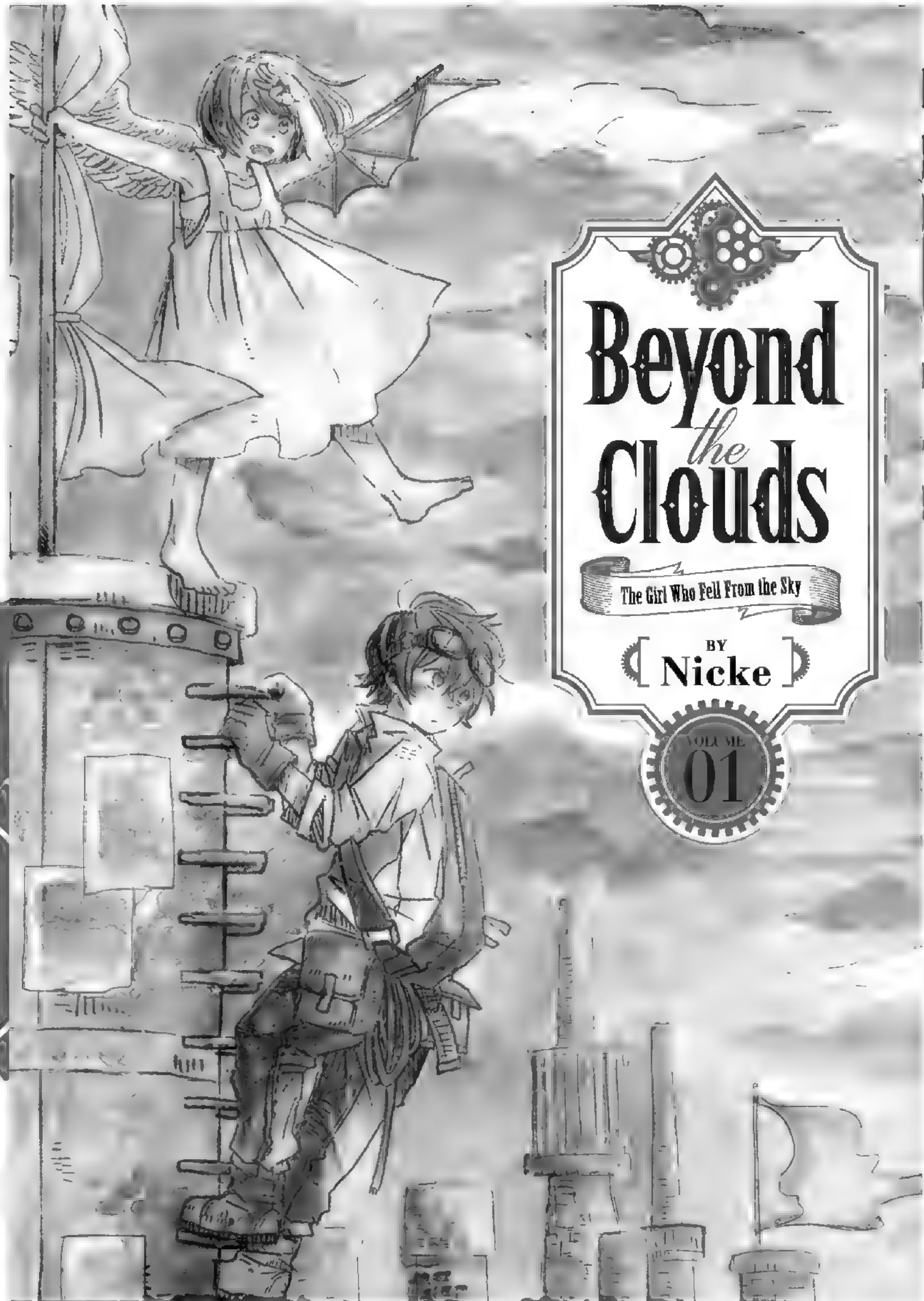




To be continued.



Young characters and steampunk setting,  
like *Howl's Moving Castle* and *Battle Angel Alita*



Beyond the Clouds © 2018 Nicke / Ki-oon

A boy with a talent for machines and a mysterious girl whose wings he's fixed will take you beyond the clouds! In the tradition of the high-flying, resonant adventure stories of Studio Ghibli comes a gorgeous tale about the longing of young hearts for adventure and friendship!



The adorable new odd-couple cat comedy manga from the creator of the beloved *Chi's Sweet Home*, in full color!

Praise for *Chi's Sweet Home*  
“Nearly impossible to turn away... a true all-ages title that anyone, young or old, cat lover or not, will enjoy. The stories will bring a smile to your face and warm your heart.”  
—School Library Journal



# Sue & Tai-chan

Konami Kanata

Sue is an aging housecat who's looking forward to living out her life in peace... but her plans change when the mischievous black tomcat Tai-chan enters the picture! Hey! Sue never signed up to be a catsitter! *Sue & Tai-chan* is the latest from the reigning meow-narch of cute kitty comics, Konami Kanata.



**CUTE ANIMALS AND LIFE LESSONS,  
PERFECT FOR ASPIRING PET VETS OF ALL AGES!**



For an 11-year-old, Yuzu has a lot on her plate. When her mom gets sick and has to be hospitalized, Yuzu goes to live with her uncle who runs the local veterinary clinic. Yuzu's always been scared of animals, but she tries to help out. Through all the tough moments in her life, Yuzu realizes that she can help make things all right with a little help from her animal pals, peers, and kind grown-ups.

**Every new patient is a  
furry friend in the making!**





# SAINT☆YOUNG MEN

A LONG AWAITED ARRIVAL IN PREMIUM 2-IN-1 HARDCOVER

After centuries of hard work, Jesus and Buddha take a break from their heavenly duties to relax among the people of Japan, and their adventures in this lighthearted buddy comedy are sure to bring mirth and merriment to all!



“Brilliant...the physical comedy and facial expressions will make you literally LOL.”

—Sam Humphries  
(host of *DC Daily*;  
writer, *Green Lanterns*,  
*Legendary Star-Lord*)





The art-deco cyberpunk classic from the creators  
of *xxxHOLiC* and *Cardcaptor Sakura*!

“Starred Review.  
This experimental  
sci-fi work from  
CLAMP reads like a  
romantic version of  
*AKIRA*.”  
—Publishers Weekly



# CLOVER

COLLECTOR'S EDITION



Su was born into a bleak future, where the government keeps tight control over children with magical powers—codenamed “Clovers.” With Su being the only “four-leaf” Clover in the world, she has been kept isolated nearly her whole life. Can ex-military agent Kazuhiko deliver her to the happiness she seeks? Experience the complete series in this hardcover edition, which also includes over twenty pages of ravishing color art!



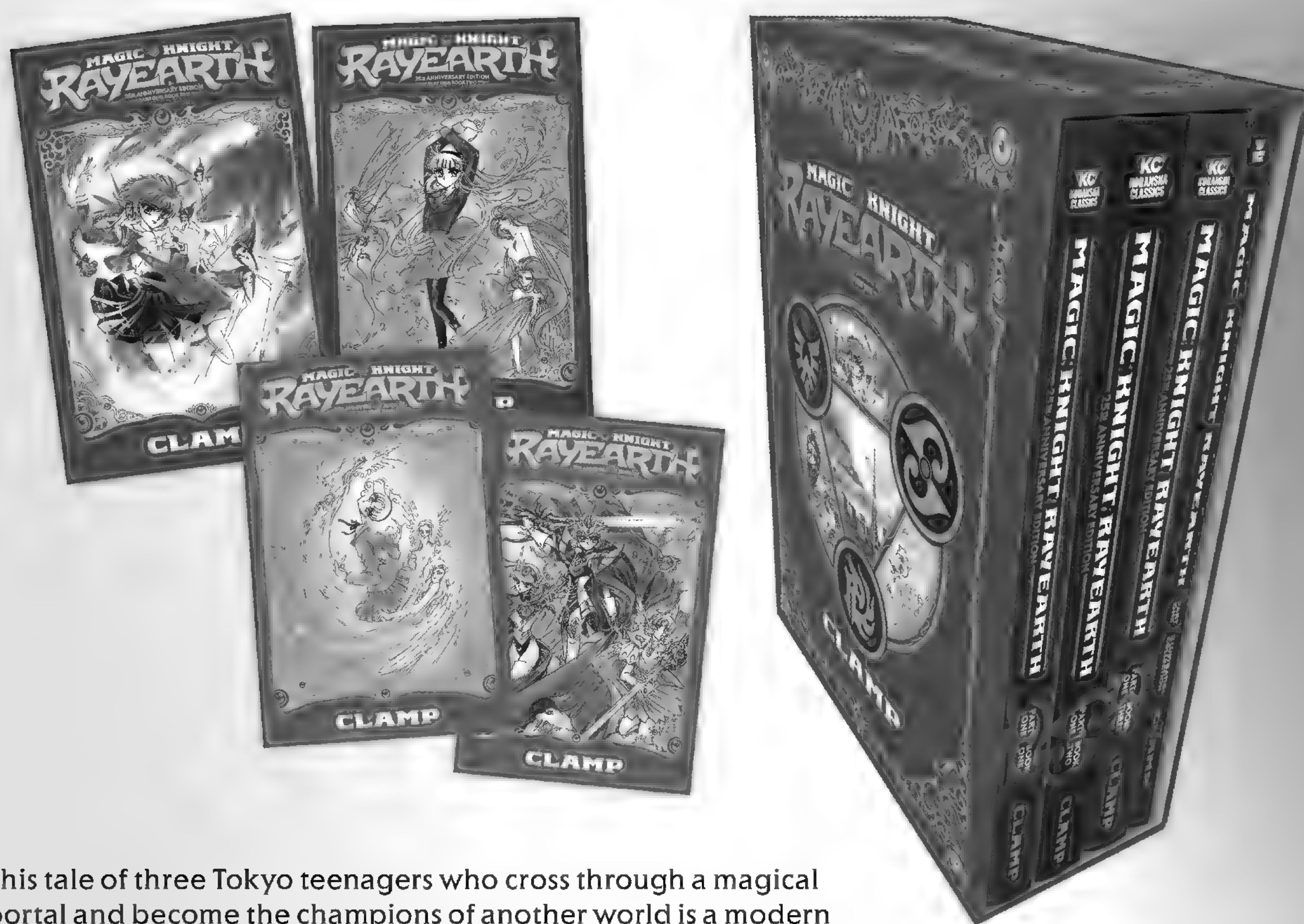


# MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH

25th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

## CLAMP

**A BELOVED CLASSIC MAKES ITS STUNNING RETURN IN  
THIS GORGEOUS, LIMITED EDITION BOX SET!**



This tale of three Tokyo teenagers who cross through a magical portal and become the champions of another world is a modern manga classic. The box set includes three volumes of manga covering the entire first series of *Magic Knight Rayearth*, plus the series's super-rare full-color art book companion, all printed at a larger size than ever before on premium paper, featuring a newly-revised translation and lettering, and exquisite foil-stamped covers. A strictly limited edition, this will be gone in a flash!

**KC/**  
**KODANSHA**  
**COMICS**



The beloved characters from  
*Cardcaptor Sakura* return in a brand new,  
reimagined fantasy adventure!



“[*Tsubasa*] takes readers on a fantastic ride that only gets more exhilarating with each successive chapter.” —Anime News Network

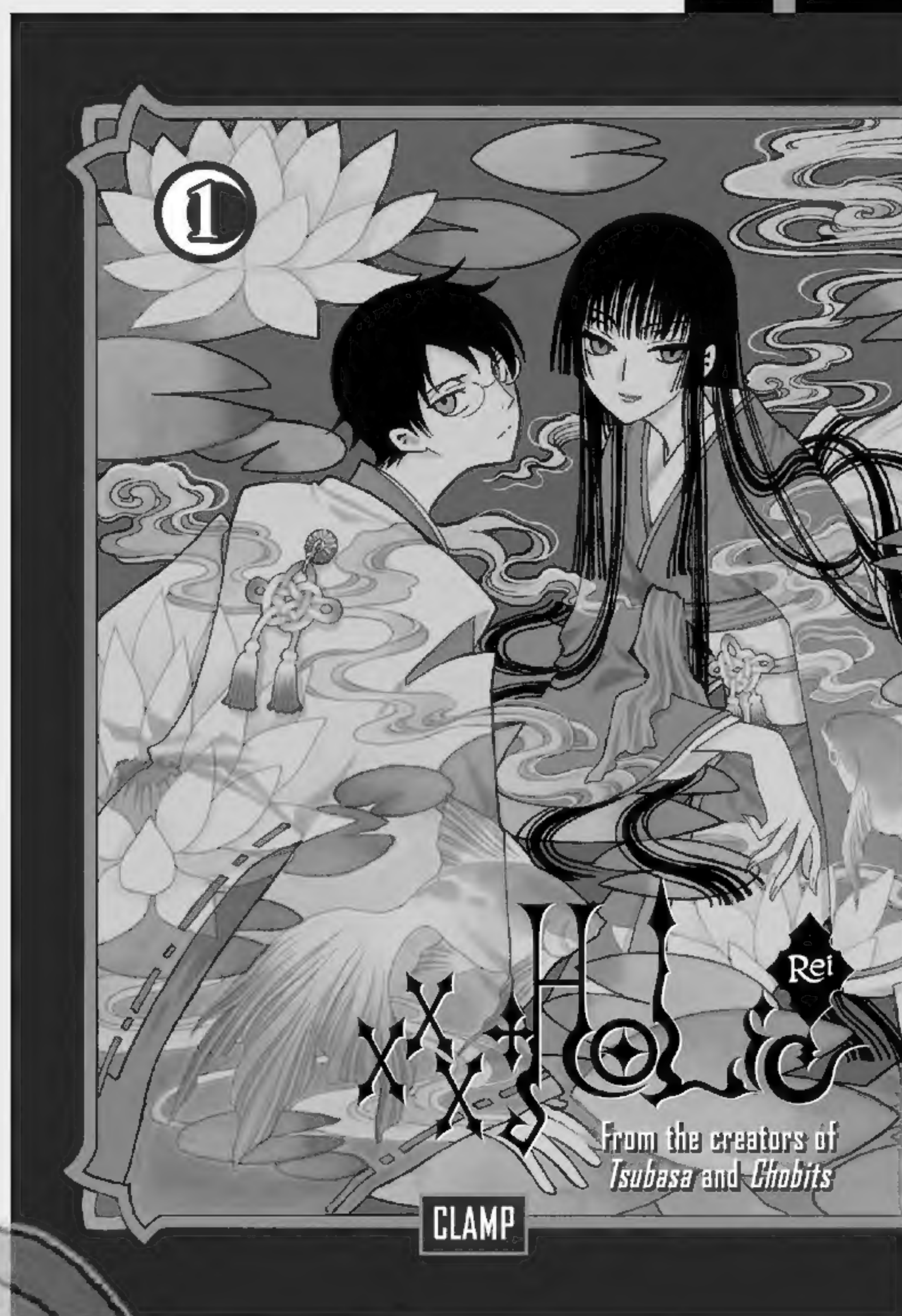
In the Kingdom of Clow, an archaeological dig unleashes an incredible power, causing Princess Sakura to lose her memories. To save her, her childhood friend Syaoran must follow the orders of the Dimension Witch and travel alongside Kurogane, an unrivaled warrior; Fai, a powerful magician; and Mokona, a curiously strange creature, to retrieve Sakura’s dispersed memories!





"Clever, sassy, and original....xxxHOLiC has the inherent hallmarks of a runaway hit."  
—NewType magazine

Beautifully seductive artwork and uniquely Japanese depictions of the supernatural will hypnotize CLAMP fans!



# xxxHOLiC

## OMNIBUS 1

CLAMP

Kimihiro Watanuki is haunted by visions of ghosts and spirits. He seeks help from a mysterious woman named Yuko, who claims she can help. However, Watanuki must work for Yuko in order to pay for her aid. Soon Watanuki finds himself employed in Yuko's shop, where he sees things and meets customers that are stranger than anything he could have ever imagined.

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## **Magus of the Library 4**

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